There is no question that future job-search success depends on building and developing your career brand. Landing a job involves more than searching for the right opportunity. It requires selling yourself as the ideal candidate to employers.

Creating a professional brand will help others see you as a prominent expert in your industry. Your skills, personality, and values all tie into your personal brand to help employers know what is important to you, what you’re good at, and what you’re able to bring to their organization. Your career success depends on a personal brand, which includes your reputation, your network, and your value to a company.

Job seekers can leverage the same strategies companies use to brand products to brand themselves, including social media and branding tool kits. All you need to do is package and present yourself in a way that grabs employers’ attention and markets you to others.

Here are five branding tips to help you position yourself for career success:

1. **Discover your brand.** Your goal as a job seeker is to obtain employment related to your passion. According to Mashable.com, “The core of your personal brand should be a well-fleshed out idea of your skills, knowledge, background and professional ambitions.” The first steps are to figure out what you want to do, to establish goals, and to develop a plan that will help you to get there. Make sure your strengths and assets match how others perceive your strengths and assets. It’s all about sending a clear message to employers about what they will be getting by hiring you.

2. **Create your brand.** Develop a personal “branding tool kit” that consists of a professional-looking business card, a well-crafted resume and cover letter, and references. These tools should offer critical information about your academic and professional background and accomplishments. Be sure to customize them to each targeted position based on job description keywords, required qualifications, and the nature of the company.

3. **Develop a personal style that stands out from the crowd.** Dress to impress! Even an email address can pose a great branding opportunity. Use your firstname.lastname@. In an interview, often times the best communicator is the one who gets the job, rather than the most qualified candidate. People are judged based on first impressions, which typically occur online with a Google search. Your personal brand is all about who you are, what you have to offer, and what you want to be known for.
4. **Showcase your brand to employers.** Social media is the best place to establish an online presence and gain greater visibility with potential employers. Depending on your interests, you may want to develop an ePortfolio, a website, a LinkedIn profile and/or a Facebook page to become more visible. These tools will help you to create your own advertising, to search for jobs, or to meet other professionals in your industry. A blog will help make you more visible while lending your expertise in your interest areas. This is one way to position yourself as an expert. Google yourself. Employers do!

5. **Networking is one of the most direct and effective means of developing a personal brand.** Leverage networks online and through personal connections to reveal job leads. Use your contacts to connect with influential people in your desired industry.

Personal branding is a critical component of any career. Personal branding uses a combination of technology and resources that will increase your visibility and awareness as a candidate. These tips will help you in landing your next job.

Career Center experts can help you to identify your strengths and assets to make sure you are effectively branding yourself to potential employers. Learn more by visiting CareerCenter.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-2200.