



# Enhancing Personal Brand With Professional Development

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**T**o succeed in today's workplace, employees need to demonstrate value that is unique and credible in a way that convinces employers they are making the right choice by investing in the employee. Demonstrating unique, credible value requires a strong personal brand.

## Defining Your Brand

Personal branding refers to how people position and promote themselves in the professional world. It's a

conscious decision to frame one's value in a way that makes a continued impression on employers, customers, and peers.

According to The Manifest 2020 Recruitment Survey, 95 percent of employers believe a personal statement or elevator pitch is important when evaluating a job candidate. The same study found that 90 percent of employers use social media when evaluating a candidate. This indicates that employers pay attention to what your brand looks like, and use it to determine your fit for new opportunities.

No matter what role you play in your organization, you are the architect, leader, and owner of your personal brand. Think of it as your professional style: determine your goals, establish a cohesive narrative about who you are and what you have to offer, and distill it into an image that inspires.

## How Professional Development Improves Your Brand

The most promising way to enhance your narrative and demonstrate value to your organization is through professional development. At a minimum, engaging in professional development demonstrates:

- **Self-management** — For rising professionals, professional development equates to self-management skills. Professional development — especially when self-paced — calls for the determination to make plans, juggle lessons, and meet deadlines. Taking the initiative to build knowledge conveys to employers that you know how to manage your success.
- **Commitment** — Seeing a professional development goal through to completion demonstrates an investment in your role. Employers will see that you are diligent about — and they can hold you accountable for — personal growth, even as you complete ongoing responsibilities. That commitment to excellence can be an attractive addition to any brand.
- **Adaptability** — Adaptability is particularly important now, as the ever-changing business environment has led many organizations to name the “ability to learn and adapt” as today’s most valuable soft skill. Experts at leading recruitment consultancy Michael Page, for example, list adaptability as the second-most in-demand skill of 2021 (just after communication). Pursuit of professional development demonstrates both the willingness and ability to gain new competencies in times of change.
- **Expertise** — A 2020 poll conducted by the Strada Education Network’s Center for Consumer Insights shows increasing preference for and recognition of non-degree training options. As the rate of change continues to grow, just-in-time professional development will be the key to demonstrating expertise and credibility. Continued professional development serves as evidence to employers, customers, and other stakeholders that your industry knowledge is fresh. In addition, if your pursuit results in a new title or designation, your personal brand gains new clarity: Others can get a quick sense of where your strengths are before you even point them out.
- **Future preparedness** — Only 10 percent of executives say they have some grasp of what skills will be needed in the future, according to Deloitte Global’s 2020 Readiness Report. To keep up with the pace of change, employees will need to learn on the job. Professional development that is relevant to your role can empower you to navigate the future. It can help you understand how all the functions of a system work together, and build readiness for new roles and responsibilities.

All of these traits contribute to marketability, which refers to how much your professional brand appeals to potential employers. However, professional development can transform more than just the individual — it can also strengthen the brand of an entire organization. Fostering a culture of knowledgeable, inquisitive employees improves an organization’s prestige, and helps customers feel secure in the quality of the products and services they receive. What’s more, professional development contributes to a positive perception of the financial services industry at large. An informed and up-to-the-minute workforce tells consumers they can trust the industry to innovate, evolve, and grow through change. 🌐

## Let LL Global Help

Your personal brand matters, so we make it easy for you to make an impression. LL Global designations, such as the globally recognized Fellow, Life Management Institute™ (FLMI®) give you the knowledge to succeed and the confidence to stand out. Engaging design, self-paced coursework, and self-proctored exams make learning straightforward. And you earn digital badges to display on social media, so you can express your competence out loud.

Sixty-eight percent of surveyed senior executives say they would give preference in promotion to an employee who has earned a LOMA designation. Your personal brand speaks before you enter the room — our designations will help give it a voice you can be proud of.

*For more about our education programs, visit [www.loma.org](http://www.loma.org), or email [education@loma.org](mailto:education@loma.org).*



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