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William Arruda Contributor

I write about personal branding.

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Build Your Memory, Build Your Brand

Business is about relationships, so building your personal brand requires connecting with others on a human level. Remembering names is the cornerstone of building those relationships, and thanks to social media, your network may include hundreds of names to remember. And what about the person behind the name? Recalling important details about the people in your network enriches relationships and sets you apart from the crowd.

I reached out to [Brent Sverdloff](#), a memory coach and the author of [How Could I Forget You! A Creative Way to Remember Names and Faces](#). He shared proven tips that will help us remember all of that essential brand-building data.

If you use these time-honored methods that Brent suggests, you'll make a stronger impression, and people might even assume you remember more about them than you actually do.



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OF BIRTH 30

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El Paso

11016 Fifth St.

NAME OF CHILD Aron Acosta

4. Twin, triplet, or other 5. Number, in order of birth 6. Prenatal Full term yes

7. Legit. (ma) yes

8. Date of birth Apr 8

9. Sex M

PATHER Manuel Acosta

MOTHER Juanita Torres

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The first tip he shared is a strategy he calls Meet, Greet, and Repeat. You can't forget what you don't know, Brent says. We often don't remember a name because we didn't hear it clearly in the first place. He suggests using this easy three-step process when connecting with people you are meeting for the first time.

1. MEET—Make eye contact and listen carefully. Learn the name from the get-go.
2. GREET—Repeat the name back. Reinforce the memory by speaking aloud.
3. REPEAT—Use the name in conversation as naturally as possible.

He also suggests that you retrain your brain to think in literal terms, and he provides these examples:

- Names like “Jack Black” and “Minnie Driver” are godsend, as they correspond to things we can picture in our mind's eye. The first corresponds to a playing card plus a swatch of dark color. The second is a fictional mouse plus a NASCAR racer.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson said that all words are frozen metaphors. Brent always encourages people to find an easy-to-picture association. It's simple with names that have literal meanings, like Lance, Violet, Robin, and Reed. If you ignore the spelling, Taylor is a “tailor,” and Tyler is a

“tiler,” two very distinct professions. You won’t confuse them again.

- Sometimes a name may remind you of someone you know, like Cousin Fred or Aunt Martha. Use images of those people in your association.

Brent has been passionate about linguistics ever since his mom took him to see a live production of *My Fair Lady* when he was 10 years old. Leveraging phonetics, he teaches people how to transform baffling names into something more concrete. For example, native English speakers know instinctively to pronounce the final sound in *cups* as a dry, hissing “ess” and the final sound in *cubs* as a buzzing “zee.” This gives us permission to make “ess” and “zee” interchangeable. So when you get names like “Zack” and “Zander,” you can turn them into “sack” and “sander.” Much easier to visualize!

Brent also says that flexing your memory is a vital part of health and well-being – and that’s the foundation for building a winning personal brand. He says, “You watch what you eat, make time for exercise, and try to get proper rest. But what are you doing to keep your brain fit? The holy trifecta of health is mental agility, physical exercise, and social connectedness.” Here are some things you can do right now to limber up your brain:

1. Read in hard copy. Documents can now come to you through your phone. The downside of this convenience is that you interact more superficially with the electronic format. You retain more information when you use more senses to engage with the page. The weight, the finish of the paper, the scent, the sound of it rustling, and the movements required to turn the pages help you remember, giving a distinct

- advantage to printed magazines, newspapers, hardcover books, or handwritten letters.
2. Compose your to-do lists, take notes, and write out appointments in longhand. Just as reading in hard copy stimulates muscle memory, writing freehand reinforces retention better than typing on a keypad. This phenomenon is known as “desirable difficulty”—exerting a tad more effort gives you more traction. Many actors memorize their lines by rewriting them by hand.
 3. Use your business card. Having a physical reminder of a meeting is a more memorable trigger for follow-up.
 4. Rely less on speed dial. When calling or texting, punch in a phone number by hand on occasion.
 5. Floss regularly. Research shows that bacteria related to gum disease may lead to brain inflammation and cause a host of health issues, including dementia, heart disease, and stroke.
 6. Solve puzzles. Research is inconclusive regarding the long-term cognitive benefits of tackling crosswords and other puzzles, but challenging your brain certainly doesn't have any negative effects. Even better, join someone to play Scrabble, go for a walk, or enjoy a cup of tea together. Staying socially active can help preserve brain function.

The late Stanford Professor Clifford Nass said, “We’ve got to make face-to-face time sacred, and we have to bring back the saying we used to hear all the time, and now never hear, ‘Look at me when I talk to you.’” Beyond the goal of empowering your brain and fostering a sense of community, taking the time to build relationships also helps others remember you—and the traits that make your brand unique.

Learn about uncovering and building *your* personal brand. [Download](#) my complete list of 50 eye-opening questions to ask yourself when defining your brand [here](#).

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