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COMM 664
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Brand YOU Reflection Paper: Merging Personal & Organizational Identity

My experience in our COMM 664 Organizational Identity and Brand course allowed me to realize that my thoughts on my overall employee experience may not be as fragmented as I once thought. I wondered what it would take for me to develop a relationship of longevity with a company. I thought that any position I held for less than five years would not count as real job experience. I did not think that I would be able to market and embrace the identities I would like to project as a worker. However, our course material, discussions and projects gave me the tools that I need to reinvent my employee identity. I am able to examine my relationships with organizations on a personal and professional level. I plan to negotiate optimal social contracts with employers who share my general interests.

One concept that changed my thinking of how the modern social contract compares to the traditional one involves Dalton Conley's (2009) 'intravidual.' I experienced several revelations after coming across this term in our reading. It helped me to understand how boundaries between the identities we share continue to merge as our relationships with brands become more intimate. I identify with brands based on how they help me to identify myself. They make me more comfortable with who I am from the clothes that I wear to the detergent I use. I like the Tidal app ultimately because it appeals to the music lover in me. That is an identity that persuades me to buy into this brand along with the services provided to cater to my needs as a listener and a viewer. Conley's (2009) term made me realize how our identities as consumers, employees and producers influence organizational communication. I consider my current and previous employee

experiences as they relate to the many identities I carry each day. I was honestly ecstatic to realize how impactful communication in these moments are, but I considered how the politics of these spaces still reflect some traditional trends. I am more aware of how my experience as an employee can influence my life outside of the workplace. This causes me much concern.

I think Amit Kumar Singh (2009) captures an approach that I have been taking to my professional experiences when it comes to ‘boundaryless careers.’ I was told early on in life that I would not be successful with such thinking because you ‘only get to your next career goal with ten years of experience at one advertising firm,’ for example. I just do not see myself dedicating that much time to one organization as an employee. Anya Kamenetz’s (2012) thoughts on four-year careers resonated with my ambitions as a person with interests across multiple industries. My current approach challenges Robert Safian’s (2012) idea of employees not having to be a ‘jack-of-all-trades.’ I think we are required to do so in this job market. I seek a social contract with an employer that suits this aspect of my identity. I know this will be a challenge, but I am able to take on several roles at a time under one position. I think that the idea of ‘career’ still resembles that of ten years ago. However, I think we are shifting to a more concise version of this with shorter tenures and more diverse experience. Employees are expected to be flexible when it comes to taking on new roles. My skills represent my interdisciplinary approach to projects. This is one of the reasons I desire to maintain a visible and conscious separation between my work life and personal life. However, this challenge confronts me daily.

One of my employers is an urban arts organization. My identity as an artist contributes to the personal connections I make with my work as a managing editor and social media manager. I think that the creative director can be a bit overbearing when it comes to personal

communication. We communicate by phone and email mostly, and I just cannot find a way to draw the line. I receive texts and emails at all times of the day. Josh Bersin's (2012) words have stuck with me for this reason because they iterate that we can work anywhere by many means. I think this can be quite overwhelming to analyze once we realize that work can override privacy by each sound of a notification. I have put my phone on airplane mode and let the director know that I would be able to get back to them at a later time. However, there's always much more work waiting so I am still attempting to find a balance.

I think another challenge for me as a worker today is adapting to significant changes in organizational management. This usually sets me off key in my performance of organizational tasks. It takes me much time to adjust. One more major challenge I face is bargaining for recognition of my work in the form of a promotion or a raise. I must work at fighting for the compensation I deserve for the work that I do. Instagram, job search sites, and freelancing networks have given me the chance to define my potential experience as an employee. I realize that I have more freedom than I was once told. I am understanding my value as an employee in ways I never imagined. I think the key strategies that I will employ to maintain a self-satisfying, coherent identity as a worker in today's economy will be focused on the promotion of individual qualities I often shun. I have been told that I am a natural leader, and I find myself avoiding these positions because I do not lead with a command similar to other leaders in the environment I may be in. I think some of my desires will be satisfied in leadership positions which in turn may help me to develop a closer relationship with organizational identity. If I am more assertive as an employee with more confidence placed in my work, I will continue to gain the trust of colleagues who see my potential. I am working toward this each day.

References

Bersin, J. (2012). The end of a job as we know it. *Forbes*.

Conley, D. (2009). *Elsewhere USA*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Kamenetz, A. (2012). The four-year career. Fast Company.

Safian, R. (2012). Generation flux. Fast Company.

Singh, A. K. (2009). Changing social contract between employer and employee.

Professional Identity Plan

Interests & Passions: I am most passionate about social justice causes such as racial equality and women rights. I use different channels from social media platforms to organizational positions to express how I feel about these issues. I aim to affect change on a philosophical and socioeconomic level. I am an avid blogger so I have used this to develop my portfolio as an author for social equity. Creative writing is one of my biggest passions, and I use it to complete personal as well as professional projects. I take interest in media organizations because I have worked at a few, and the tools in these spaces make way for countless ideas to be disseminated to masses of people. All of these passions and interests are affiliated with editorial projects. I can take on more of these projects and experiment with work in different fields to gain more experience and exposure.

Strengths & Valuable Resources: My strengths are rooted in my ability to multitask and produce quality work in all responsibilities I agree to take on. I am willing and able to complete tasks that others were not able to fulfill with an openness to repeat actions that may not be within my job description. This flexibility has caused my position name to change at a few organizations. I am self-motivated and will stop at nothing to reach a goal no matter the obstacle. I organize time to focus on creative projects from advertising campaigns to magazine publications. I believe that all work is based in research to a degree so I use this skill to add to

organizational and personal knowledge. It helps to know what exists before committing to idea plans and ideas.

Some of the resources I have include connections to networks of individuals who share some of my passions and interests. This includes colleagues in school and at work. My friend groups and other affinity groups offer many introspective points of communication where we are able to collaborate. We share ideas and compare shared knowledge to solve problems. I can use these skills in various industries and complete contract work for different companies all at one time. I am currently able to do this to a degree.

Skills & Experiences Needed: One of the main skills I need to develop is assertiveness as a leader in the decision making process. I depend on others to make the final decision even if I am in a managerial position or role for a period of time. I must work on planning my execution of projects more efficiently. I can save time to focus on other tasks and to fulfill other roles or to assist with a collaboration. I must attend marketing conferences to develop a more targeted strategy to manage social media accounts for organizations. Connecting with other creatives across fields will help to build my base. I need more freelancing experiences with companies to build my portfolio in advertising and copywriting along with copy editing for creative organizations. I plan to build experience across organizations as well. These skills and experiences will prepare me for my ultimate goal to become the creative director of a magazine and blog. They will also opportunities for me to take on a variety of editorial positions.

Professional Identity Communication Plan

Key Messages

- Representative of and advocate for multicultural narratives

- Editorial proficiency with a focus in print magazine and digital publication
- Interdisciplinary approach to creative and nonprofit campaigns
- Marketing and advertising consultant for social justice campaigns

Mediums

- Video to communicate personal views on inclusive environments to promote openness
- Storyboard templates to organize integral messages across channels in-person/online
- Electronic and physical shipments of marketing materials such as published work
- Social media posts to network with others who share interests or may request services

Platforms

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- WordPress
- Twitter
- Upwork