



Athlete  
365

PERSONAL  
BRAND  
TOOLKIT





**Part 1:** What is a brand and what can it do for you?

**Part 2:** Research, targeting and positioning

**Part 3:** Strategy

**Part 4:** Tactics



~ PART 1: ~

WHAT IS A BRAND  
AND WHAT CAN IT  
DO FOR YOU?



**IF YOU'RE AN ATHLETE LOOKING TO MAXIMISE YOUR FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES, DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND CAN GO A LONG WAY TO HELPING YOU ACHIEVE THIS.**



**A BRAND** is something that revolves around an audience. **A BRAND** will represent a product or service that serves **the needs** of that audience better than its competitors, so **that more** attention is retained and, ultimately, money can be made.

In this series, we're going to discuss personal brand. This is something that represents you, an athlete looking to grow their influence with the aim of collaborating with businesses or moving into a specific industry.

A strong personal brand will establish two important things:

1. **RECOGNITION**
2. **TRUST**



A well-maintained brand will continue to grow these two things within an audience. With the correct research, strategy and tactics, more people will be able to recognise your brand and associate with it a level of trust based upon what you have consistently provided.

Growing and maintaining a brand takes planning and hard work. It requires balancing long-term and short-term thinking, a good understanding of your target audience and how you're going to consistently address their wants and needs.





In this series of best practices for Personal Brand, we'll take a look at:



- **RESEARCH, TARGETING AND POSITIONING** (PAGE 6)
- **STRATEGY** (PAGE 13)
- **TACTICS** (PAGE 19)

If you think you can balance developing your personal brand with your professional career, then keep reading!

This series is primarily aimed at athletes who don't already have a global reputation and who want to explore how they can grow their influence in other areas. But, if you're Usain Bolt and reading this, we're sure this series will be able to help you too!

Together with the tools and resources available in the Athlete365 Personal Brand toolkit, at the end of this series you'll be ready to begin growing your own brand.



**PART 2:**  
**RESEARCH, **  
**TARGETING AND**  
** POSITIONING**  
 

## Everything starts with research...

Every successful brand understands its audience. Good research will show estimated audience size, competitor analysis and audience behaviour.

As an athlete looking to grow their personal brand, you should perform market research so you can learn how to keep improving your offering to enjoy continued success.

Research will tell you what the audience is most interested in and, crucially, how it behaves; allowing you to shape your strategy and tactics to meet its needs. For example, if you learn there is a high demand for nutritional advice among sports fans, you may look to target that audience and position yourself accordingly.

Your chosen audience can be bigger or smaller than the above example of sports nutrition, you just need to be confident there is enough demand in your audience and that you can supply it with your ideas!

It makes sense to target the audience you are most familiar with – your sport. But, think about what areas within your audience you can exploit to make your personal brand stand out.

In a perfect world, your passion or initial idea for your brand will match up with market demand. But, if there is no demand for your idea or there is lots of competition, you should think about concentrating on addressing something an audience truly wants. This way you know you're on the right track to establishing a successful personal brand.



### REMEMBER:

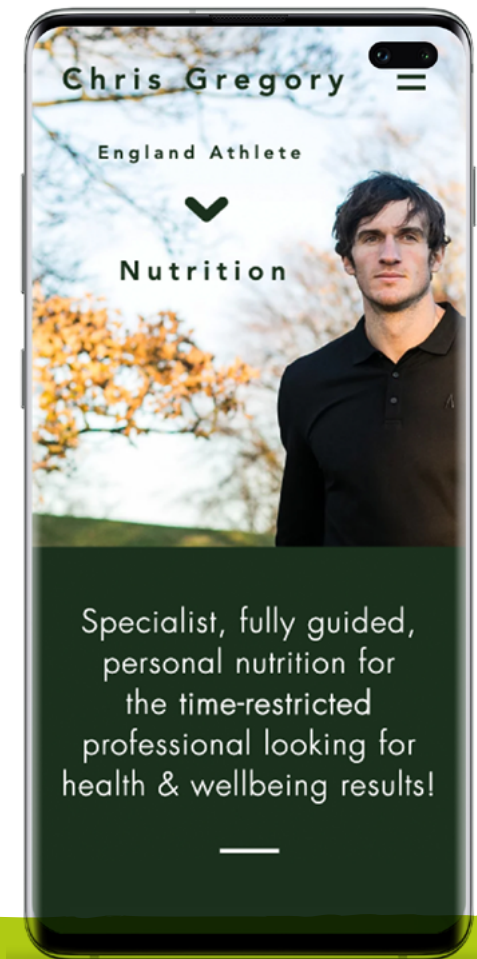
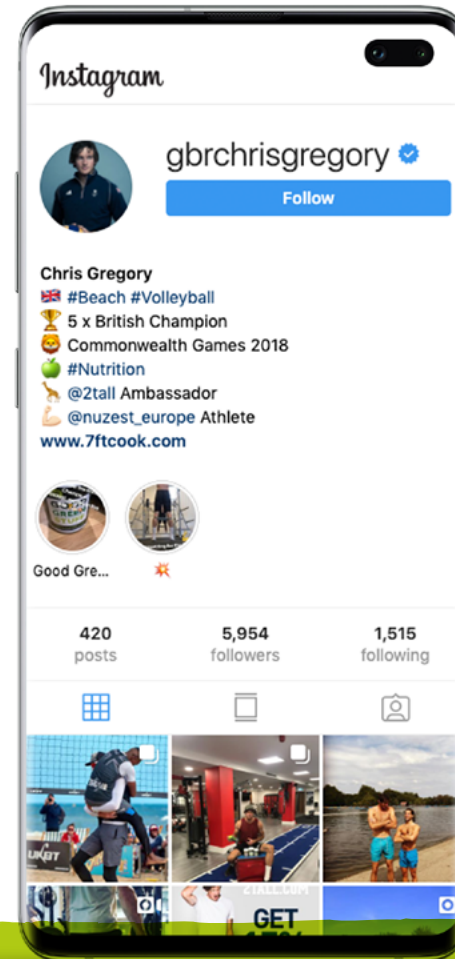
You are not the market. Research will tell you where you should focus your personal brand.



# CHRIS GREGORY GB BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Take a look at what GB Beach Volleyball athlete, Chris Gregory, is doing with his personal brand. He's successfully collaborating with companies in his chosen field of nutrition and maintaining engaging online channels of communication.

As an individual athlete, you don't have the resources available to big businesses to perform exceptional, in-depth market research. But that doesn't mean you can't do any at all. Here's some things to do when performing important foundational research for your brand.





## Market analysis

In this stage of the research we want answers to a few important questions:

1. **HOW BIG IS THE MARKET?**
2. **WHAT ARE THE CORE BEHAVIOURS OF THE MARKET?**

Before we begin building a personal brand, we want to understand how many people are searching for a specific topic and to understand how many potential sponsors are active in that market. This will help you decide where to focus your efforts.

As you're growing a personal brand, attention will be your currency. Understanding how many people are searching for, or engaging with, a subject will allow you to build a clear picture of where the demand is and therefore where you should think about focusing your personal brand.

Here are some free tools that will allow you to build this picture:

- **GOOGLE TRENDS**
- **FACEBOOK INSIGHTS**
- **STATISTA**
- **CONSUMER BAROMETER**
- **PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

Desk research will also uncover surveys and reports conducted in your potential markets that provide relevant data.

Once you've identified the area in which you want to grow your personal brand, you can use the same tools to perform deeper research into that area, to identify core consumer and competitor behaviours that will help determine your strategy and tactics.



### REMEMBER:

There's nothing stopping you from growing your brand by offering behind-the-scenes footage of your training or lifestyle, but understand that the more generic the subject is, the more competition you will face for attention. If you choose to take a more general approach, be prepared to offer something far superior to your competitors!

## Competitor analysis

Your goal is to understand the average audience member's experience with your competitor and identify the key drivers behind their behaviour.

Try to answer these core questions when performing competitor analysis:

1. **WHO'S ALREADY ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN YOUR CHOSEN AREA?**
2. **HOW DO THEY INTERACT WITH THE PUBLIC?**
3. **WHAT IS WORKING WELL, AND NOT SO WELL, FOR THEM?**

Asking other people about how they feel when they interact with your competitors will identify areas you can improve in and put you in an even better position to develop your brand.

If you can't identify any competitors, try asking other people to see if they know of any. If you still can't, you may have the market all to yourself!



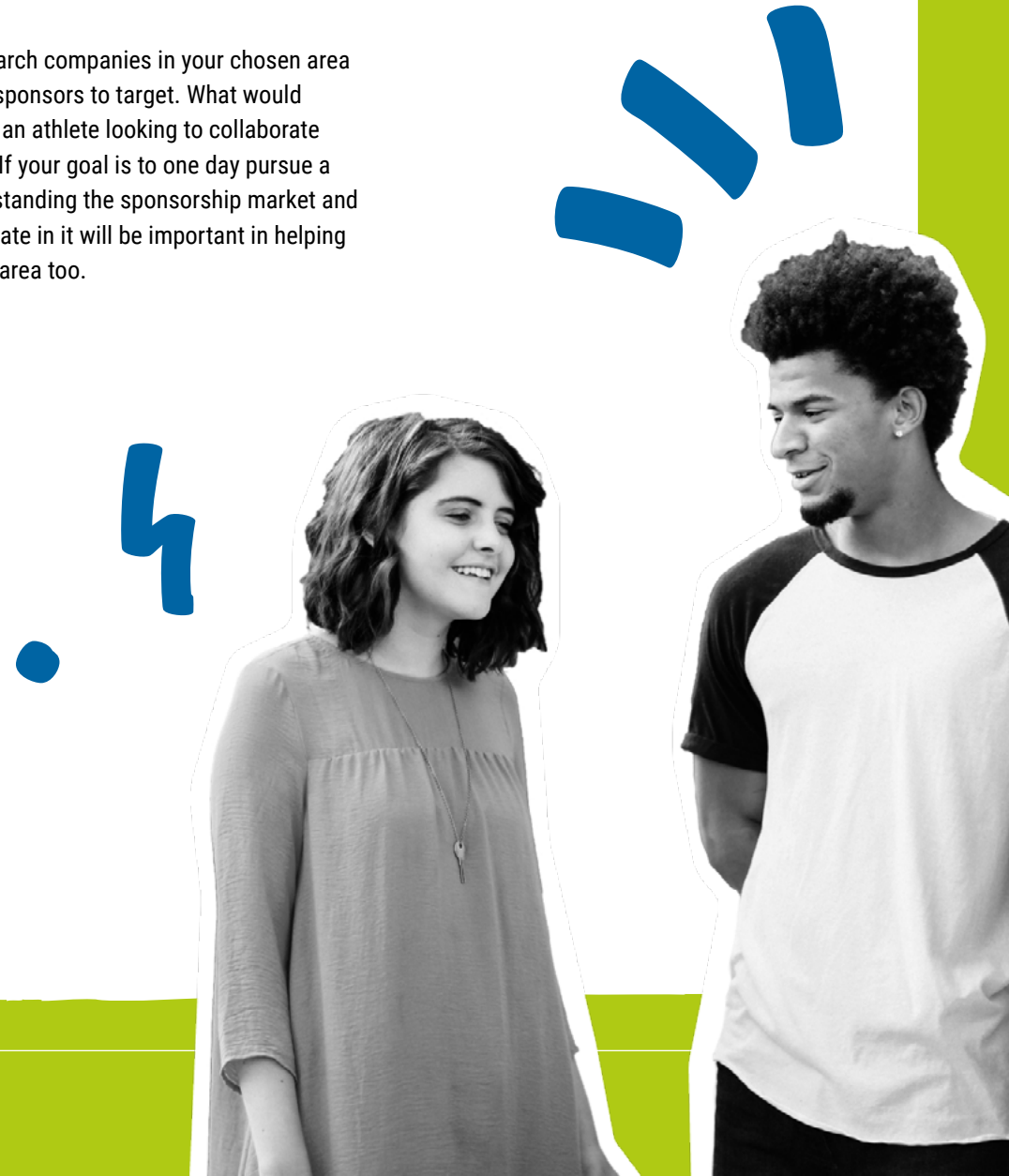
## Targeting

By this stage, you should have a clear idea of the area you want to grow in and who you're targeting with your personal brand. It may help to build an audience persona – a picture of who your consumer is – which includes key demographics and behaviours. Keeping this in mind throughout the process of developing your brand will help you to focus on delivering the right service, by answering the questions of where, when and how you're going to reach them.

***YOU MAY HAVE EVEN IDENTIFIED A FEW PERSONAS YOU WANT TO TARGET!***

A helpful free tool for building an audience persona is <https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona>. You can edit the profile to suit your personal brand needs, so you have a visual representation of your audience.

Finally, you can research companies in your chosen area to identify potential sponsors to target. What would they like to see from an athlete looking to collaborate with their business? If your goal is to one day pursue a collaboration, understanding the sponsorship market and how you can participate in it will be important in helping you set goals in this area too.



## Positioning

You've done your research, you've decided on a target market, now you need to articulate your brand position.

### WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BE TO YOUR FANS?

As mentioned in Part 1, unless you're an athlete with a global name, it won't be enough to simply give people an insight into your life as an athlete. It needs to be more thought out than that. Hopefully by now you've picked an area that will give you the chance to share knowledge or inspire an audience that isn't simply based on your popularity as an athlete.

The brand positioning is as much for you as it is for the fan. It will allow you to remain delivery-focused and to continue building on the two things discussed in Part 1:

1. RECOGNITION
2. TRUST

The key is simplicity – your position needs to be understood and communicated by the average person.

### VETTING YOUR POSITIONING:

**Relevance:** Do my fans care?

**Clarity:** Will my fans get it?

**Credibility:** Will my fans believe it?

**Distinctiveness:** From my fans' viewpoint, does it set me apart from my competitors in a meaningful way?

**Attainability:** Can I deliver? Are my claims consistent with my performance?

**Sustainability:** Can the position be maintained over time?

Having covered the research, targeting and positioning, you can now move on to thinking about exactly what you want to achieve and how you plan to achieve it. In Part 3, we'll discuss strategy for your personal brand.





**PART 3:**  
**STRATEGY**

You've done the groundwork to ensure your strategy for growing your personal brand is evidence based. Now it's time to write down what you're going to do, so you can plan effectively and keep yourself on track throughout its development.

In Part 3, we'll discuss the importance of setting clear objectives for your personal brand. As we discussed in Part 2, your currency is attention, so this focuses your strategy on determining one main thing: how you can best reach and engage your audience in order to keep their attention.



## The 3Ps

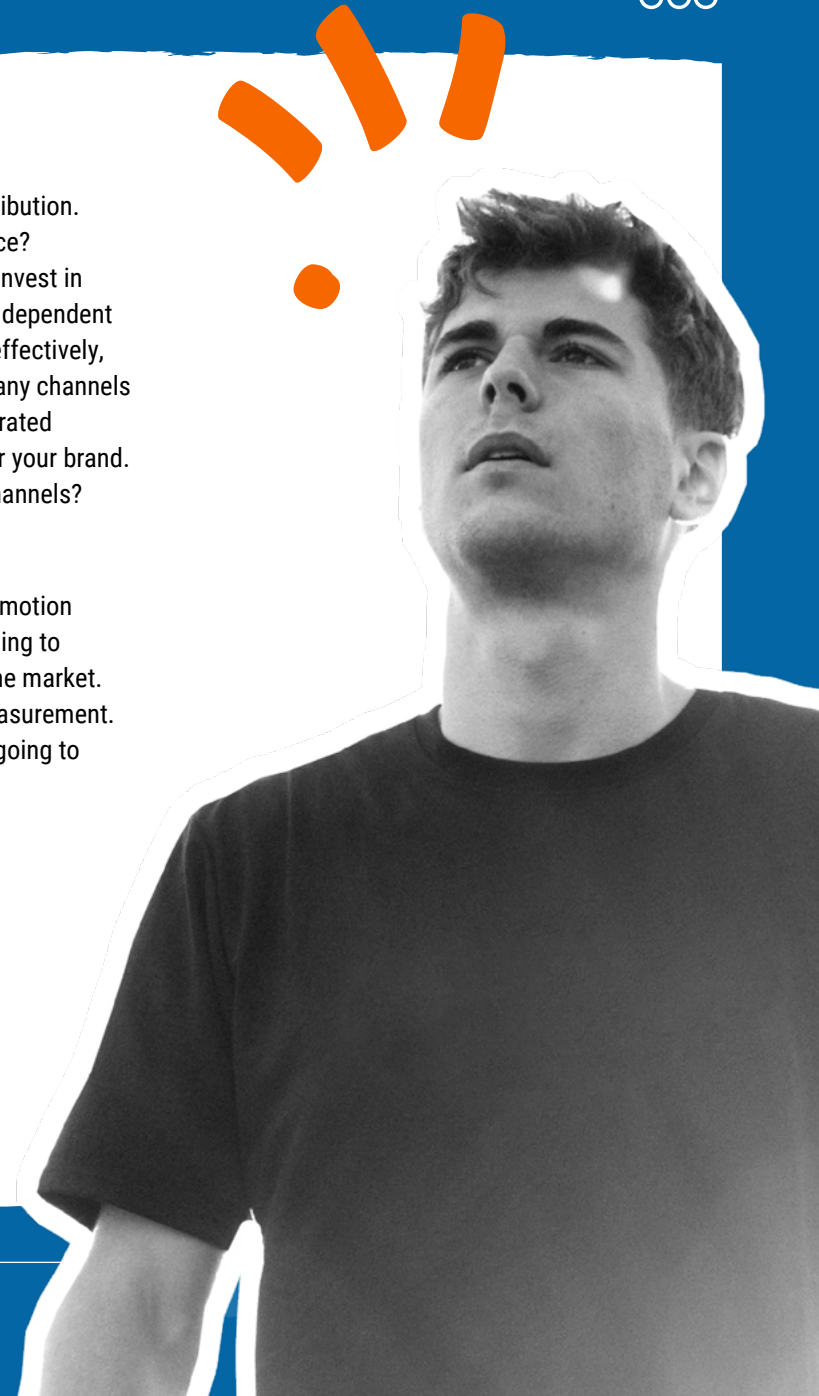
In traditional marketing strategy, most brands will adopt a marketing mix that consists of several elements designed to achieve whatever objectives are set. These are usually simplified into the '4Ps'. As we're focusing on personal branding, we can remove the 4th P from the mix, which represents pricing, and simplify it even more!

Thinking about these three things will help you develop an effective personal branding strategy:

**1. PRODUCT:** Think about your service to your audience as your product. What are you, as an athlete, going to offer your market to retain their attention? Think about how you can create the best product, based on your research, and what investments you need to make to achieve this.

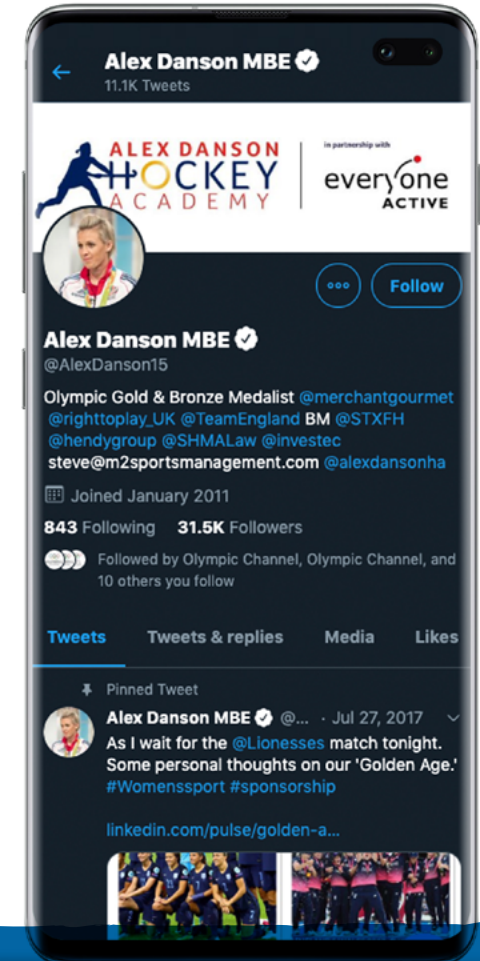
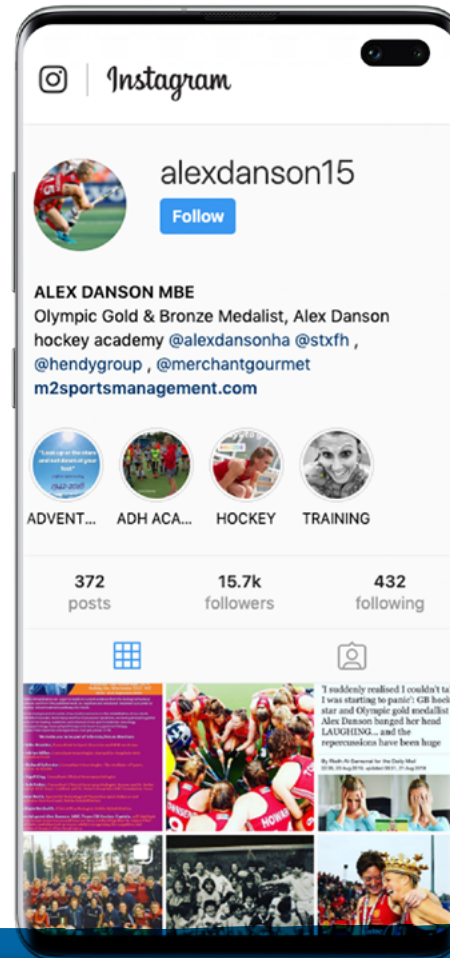
**2. PLACE:** These are your channels of distribution. Which channels are best for your audience? Research shows the more channels you invest in the bigger your return. HOWEVER, this is dependent on your ability to manage each channel effectively, so take some time to think about how many channels you can successfully manage in an integrated approach and then pick the right ones for your brand. Will you have a website? Social media channels? You may even end up picking just one...

**3. PROMOTION:** The specific details of promotion will fall under tactics – it's how you're going to effectively communicate your brand to the market. Think message, content, advertising, measurement. Have a clear idea of which levers you're going to pull to ensure effective communication.



# ALEX DANSON GB HOCKEY PLAYER

GB Hockey player Alex Danson grew her personal brand online and expanded into running a hockey academy for children with Everyone Active, as well as working with several sponsors. A great example of where proper strategic thinking can take you!





## Setting goals and objectives

Goals and objectives are fundamental to any brand strategy. They will help you keep sight of your overall desire and keep you on track to achieving it.

Think hard about what you want to ultimately achieve and write that as your goal. It shouldn't be something you expect to achieve immediately, perhaps not even in the near future.

For example, a goal for your personal brand may be to collaborate with a specific company. This is something that will require incremental progress to achieve.

You can then decide on appropriate objectives you can work towards in the first year to move you closer to your goal.

When setting objectives, we recommend you follow the **SMART** rule. This way you will stay on track to achieving them and your ultimate goal.

### Objectives must be:

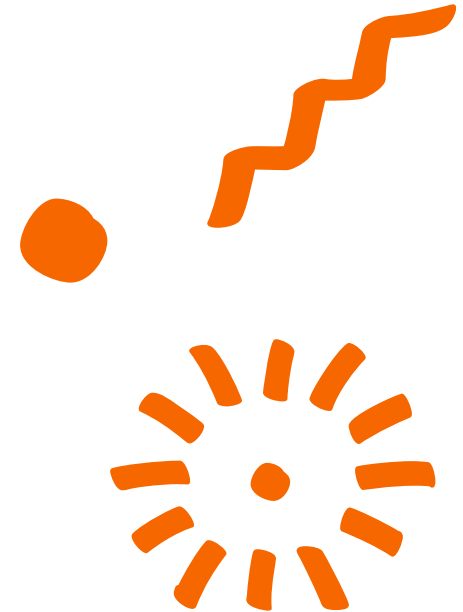
**SPECIFIC:** 'Be successful' isn't a good objective. There is no use in setting a generic objective, so make it specific to your personal brand.

**MEASURABLE:** Is it quantifiable? If you can't measure it, you won't be able to determine if you've succeeded.

**AMBITIOUS:** Don't be too cautious, set yourself an objective that will make you work hard.

**REALISTIC:** To balance the above, set an objective that is clearly realistic for you to achieve with your resources. Don't do too much too soon, and don't have too many objectives!

**TIMEBOUND:** We all need deadlines. We recommend working off 12-month cycles, remember there will always be other years to achieve more things. Find a timeframe that suits your needs and specify it in your objective.



### REMEMBER:

Objectives are measurable actions you will take to move you closer to your goal.

Here's an example of good goal and objective setting for personal brand:

**Goal:**

To collaborate with [name of company/companies] in a content series providing nutritional information to athletes.

**Objectives:**

1. *TO IMPROVE MY INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT RATE BY 1.5% BY JUNE 2020.*
2. *TO ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE IN FIVE MAJOR COMPANIES IN THE NUTRITION INDUSTRY BY JUNE 2020.*

As you can see, the objectives outlined above will help move you closer to achieving your overall goal. An improved Instagram rate will show prospective sponsors you have an influence over your audience. Establishing relationships with the right people will allow your collaboration with your identified companies to grow organically.

Once you're happy with your goals and objectives, you can now begin thinking about which tools are best for achieving them. We'll discuss this in Part 4: Tactics – the final part of the Personal Brand Toolkit.



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**PART 4:**  
**TACTICS**

## Now it's time to deliver on all your hard work so far!

Your research has informed your strategy, your strategy articulates what you're going to do, now comes the fun part of communicating your personal brand to your audience.

In your strategy you'll have addressed the what, where and how. Now, with the tactics, you must get into detail on the how and decide which tools are going to help you achieve your objectives.

For personal brand, your own content marketing will sit at the heart of your communications. Therefore, we must look at the best practice for delivering exceptional content on your chosen platforms that will engage your market.

We'll also take a look at what it takes to make the most of the spotlight when it shines on you at Games-time and how to communicate your brand in front of the camera – something as an athlete you have the opportunity to take advantage of.

Don't be too narrow in your planning for different mediums of communication. As an athlete, you will have access to the same channels an ordinary person has, such as social media and a website, but also the opportunity to use traditional mediums effectively like mass media. It's wise to prepare for them all but focus on the ones you know you consistently have control over.



## Here are eight things we think helps makes exceptional content:

**1. YOUR STORY:** A story that is authentic, relatable, entertaining and emotional will grow your audience. Learn how to tell yours so it connects with your audience.

### REMEMBER:

People are looking for authenticity. You can give it to them – the real you needs to shine through.



First and foremost, people engage emotionally. Communicate your message by using emotional language relevant to your audience, then look to back this up with any rational elements of your personal brand to get people to keep paying attention to you.

### REMEMBER:

Lead with emotion and support with logic.



**Here's a tip:** Have a list of words that trigger various emotional responses and try to use these where relevant in your messaging.

**2. GET VISUAL!** Content formats such as images, videos and infographics are universally understood and will dramatically increase brand engagement. To successfully grow a personal brand in today's markets, great visual content is a necessity.

**Fact:** Social video generates 12 times more shares than text and images combined.

It's recommended you get comfortable producing and starring in your own videos. Whatever your chosen area is, well-produced video content will ensure people will come and listen to what you have to say. It's then your job to make sure they stay!

### 3. USE THE RIGHT TEMPLATES AND

**TECHNOLOGIES:** Proper planning is essential to successful brand development. In the Athlete365 Toolkit, we've provided a calendar you can download and fill in with your content schedule. Remember to include the name, format and platform of the content. This way, you'll know what you have to post and when weeks, maybe months in advance.



If you decide to begin creating video content for your personal brand, we recommend you make it as professional as possible by investing in, and learning how to use, post-production software such as the Adobe Suite or Final Cut Pro.

If you're going to stand out on social media, the quality of your content will need to match or surpass that of your competition. This may seem like a daunting prospect, but if you're willing to invest the time in learning these skills, or in someone else who has these skills, you will eventually enjoy the rewards.

**4. FREQUENCY:** Find the right frequency for your audience. Test higher and lower frequencies of content posting and see what gets the most engagement. As a rule, it's better to do fewer things well than more things not so well.

**5. TRACKING TRENDS:** What is your audience or the wider public talking about? Be part of the conversation in an engaging way and win yourself new fans. Look at tools that allow you to see which topics are trending daily.

**6. TALK TO YOUR FANS:** Something that is often overlooked. Manage your community by responding

to mentions, liking their comments, sharing their posts and starting conversations. You are your brand, so give your audience the direct interaction they want.

**7. GO LIVE:** Live content is beginning to outpace other types of online video content. Popular ideas for live content include interviews, announcements and events. Be sure to plan this tactic well, there's lots of risk involved with live communications, but the reward can be great.

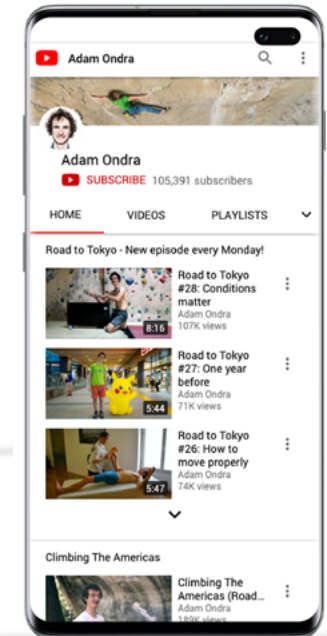
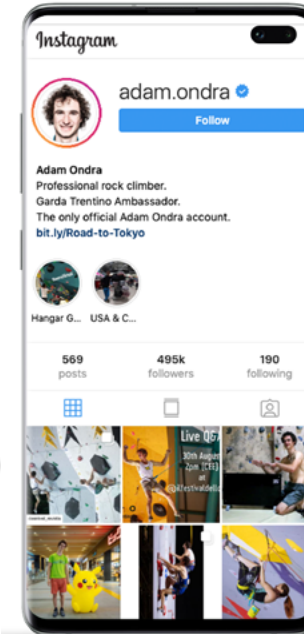
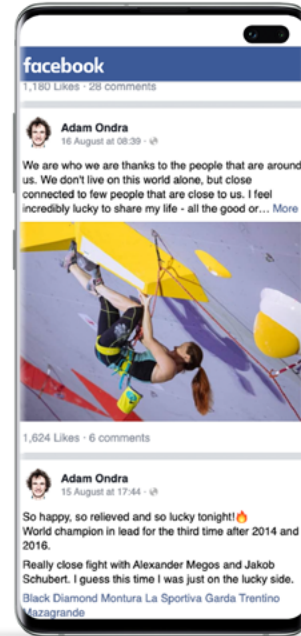
**8. EVALUATE:** This is a **fundamental** part of successful brand management. Determine from your objectives what defines success for your personal brand and then track your performance accordingly. However, you decide to measure success, set up a consistent reporting process and evaluate your brand every so often to ensure you can optimise your content and keep moving towards your goals.



# ADAM ONDRA CZECH CLIMBER

There are few better examples of athletes succeeding in growing their personal brand than Adam Ondra. The Czech climber has amassed hundreds of thousands of followers online through providing exceptional content for the climbing community.

Adam's video content is of the highest quality and he's brought on board a team to help execute this tactic. The investment Adam has made in his personal brand is clear and it shows how much hard work it takes to get to gain the recognition and trust he has from his audience.



## Becoming the face of your brand: how to use the Olympic spotlight...

So far, we've covered the elements you have complete control over – your content and your channels through which you're going to communicate.

The things you don't have control over, but have the ability to influence, are mainstream news outlets that own television channels, newspapers, websites and other online platforms. The way you react, or don't react, to the opportunities presented to you by others will have a significant impact on your personal brand.

If your professional career is going well and you've enjoyed a recent period of success in competition, you will naturally receive more attention from media. Knowing how to use this attention to your advantage will help you indirectly grow your personal brand.

This attention could take the form of post-competition interviews, in-depth written interviews and guest appearances. It can be anything where someone else is controlling the distribution – in these situations you need to know how to shape the message.

Here are our tips for shining in the spotlight:

- 1. CHECK YOUR CURRENT ONLINE PROFILE**  
and manage any potential areas of controversy. Everything is potentially permanent online. If required, make sure you control the conversation with honesty and integrity by preparing the narrative.
- 2. MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE RIGHT JOURNALISTS:**  
Journalists are important gatekeepers to the general public. If you're known as an approachable athlete within media circles the more opportunities will come your way to get your personal brand out there.
- 3. LEARN TO RELAX...** not everyone is a natural behind the camera. Practice your interview technique and, if you need them, relaxation techniques, so if the opportunity arises your personality effortlessly shines through.
- 4. KNOW WHEN TO PUSH YOUR MESSAGE:**  
A post-performance interview may not be the best time to share your thoughts and opinions. But a planned in-depth interview may be the perfect time. Learn how to react to certain opportunities to ensure you get the right message to viewers who will then go and search for you online and discover your personal brand.







# GOOD LUCK!

We hope you've found this Toolkit useful. Now it's over to you to grow your personal brand using the advice we've given you plus any other useful bits you find.

Remember, your investment in your personal brand will determine your reward. We would never advocate your investment in this area taking priority over your commitments as a professional athlete – we know succeeding in sport will dramatically help grow your personal brand, so don't lose sight of this. Find what works for you.

*If you have any questions about personal branding,  
please contact: [athlete365@olympic.org](mailto:athlete365@olympic.org)*

