MARKETING YOURSELF
How To Elevate Your Personal Platform to the Next Level
CAELAN HUNTRESS
Endorsements for Marketing Yourself

— Derek Sivers, author of Anything You Want

“There are books that you read — and there are books that you USE. Caelan has written the second kind. Consider this your action guide, implementation kit, and field manual for marketing success. Page after page of money-making ideas that work and last.”
— David Newman, author of Do It! Marketing and Do It! Speaking

“Caelan has done what is not always possible for books about branding and marketing. He’s created something practical and instantly applicable. This book is a must-read for anyone starting out and looking for a step-by-step process.”
— Donna McGeorge, bestselling author of The 25 Minute Meeting

“Personal branding literature is a genre unto itself these days, but Marketing Yourself is by far the most well-crafted, researched, and useful I’ve ever read. Caelan provides frameworks that you can employ to boost your brand right away, literally, paint-by-the-numbers. It’s packed with great examples, so I don’t feel like I’m left hanging with a good idea but no coaching. It’s all there. From values to website, here you will find everything you need to look great in the world without ever feeling overwhelmed.”
— Joshua Waldman, author of Job Searching with Social Media for Dummies
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Chapter 1

Your Personal Statement

The only person you are destined to become
is the person you decide to be.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Who do you think you are, anyway? If you’ve been marketing yourself for any length of time, it’s likely you’ve already given some thought to this question. Chances are, you’ve already written a bio or an elevator pitch for yourself a time or two. And it’s tricky, isn’t it? It’s hard to share all the different facets of yourself in a snappy little sentence. But a personal statement isn’t supposed to detail every single one of your accomplishments from your entire life. The purpose is to give others a handle so they can grasp you.

There are three types of descriptions commonly used for positioning. A bio is the longer version of who you are, what you do, and why you’re amazing. An elevator pitch is the medium-length version, and a personal statement is the shortest of the three. Each of these positioning assets can be used to get noticed, gain attention, and highlight your value to your customers.

An elevator pitch, as defined by Jeffrey Hayzlett, author of Think Big, Act Bigger, is 118 seconds. This is the average length of time of an
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elevator ride in New York City. If you’re sharing a small, confined space with someone for a minute or two, you have enough time for a basic introduction. This brief window of time can be used to plant a seed that can sprout referrals for you for years to come.

Do people have to interpret your elevator pitch? Do they have to ask for clarification? If so, it’s not done yet. Your elevator pitch should be one paragraph — or maybe two — that serves as a beacon for the people that you want to meet in the future.

A personal statement is like the headline of a flyer on a bulletin board. Bulletin boards are a mess. They collect random announcements from random people, all wanting to broadcast their message out into the world.

Think about the flyers that have gotten your attention in the past. Did you notice a flyer because it had long prose, describing many tiny details? Or was there one really powerful headline in big letters? Was it something particularly relevant to you? Did the flyer reference something you were already looking for?

You can manufacture that same kind of distinction (and gain quick attention with the right people) with your personal statement. The distillation of your bio (the longer written delivery) and your elevator pitch (the shorter verbal delivery) into a simple statement that is sticky, clear, and short becomes your personal statement.

- Sticky — easy to remember
- Clear — simple and direct
- Short — dazzles in a flash

Long, Medium, and Short Positioning

Your biography is a menu for the types of topics that you can discuss forever. These topics become the calling card for interviewers and members of the press who are looking for experts like you. A brief over-
Your Personal Statement

view of your experience and accomplishments related to these topics is what makes your bio. Writing this once, and writing it well, will save you countless hours of writer’s block in the future.

An elevator pitch can be given to anyone, and the right kinds of people will hear it as an invitation to work with you. Think of your elevator pitch as the key to the gatekeeper who answers the phone. When calling on a business to connect with a decision-maker, you often run into a gatekeeper. This person hears you out and decides whether or not to connect you with the boss. The right elevator pitch gets you access.

A personal statement is the shortest, most concentrated version of your elevator pitch and your bio. It should be easy to remember, easy to understand, and easy to endure. This makes it hard to forget and hard to interrupt.

You shouldn’t make up these positioning assets on the spot. Your written bio and verbal elevator pitch are most effective if you articulate them in advance. When someone asks you to talk about yourself, which would you rather do? Recite (or copy/paste) a prepared statement, or fumble through an improvised introduction every single time?

When people are struggling to get their platform off the ground, the problem is often in the foundation, and a solid personal statement is what gives your platform stability. It’s a signal to your future customers and collaborators. But remember, a personal statement doesn’t need to include everything you’ve ever done. Think of it more like a highlight reel.

A tightly written personal statement does two things: it clearly articulates the types of people who find you valuable, and it describes the types of things you do for them. The problems you solve, and the solutions you provide. That’s it. These are clearer signals to future customers than an exhaustive list of all your accomplishments.

The best personal statement that I have ever heard was from Cory Huff. Cory has a website called theabundantartist.com. When I met him in
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2015 at Pioneer Nation, a conference for independent entrepreneurs making a living through their laptops, I asked him, “What do you do?”

He replied, “I help people sell their art online.”

His personal statement was sticky, clear, and short. I immediately thought of everyone I knew who was an artist, struggling to sell their art online — and I sent every one of them to Cory’s website. He has such a tightly defined market, and he’s so clear about what he does for them, that it’s easy for new customers to find him.

When people can quickly and easily understand who you help, what you do, and how you do it, great things happen. Chance meetings lead to new clients and customers showing up (seemingly) out of nowhere. The truth is, people can easily connect you to people they know (people who already want to hire someone like you) when your personal statement is sticky, clear, and short, like Cory’s.

Using the simple formulas below, replace the words in CAPS to try out a new personal statement.

**Personal Statement Formulas**

“I help DEMOGRAPHIC dealing with PROBLEM by SOLUTION.”

“I help DEMOGRAPHIC OUTCOME through METHOD.”

“I provide SOLUTION to people who are DEMOGRAPHIC and want OUTCOME.”

A good personal statement can dramatically increase your referrals. By using a formula like the ones above, you clearly state the type of customer who finds you valuable, and specifically define what you do for them.

*Life is not about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.*

— George Bernard Shaw
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Personal Statement Examples

- Adan Sensei helps people have a 15-minute conversation in their target language.
- Shay Rowbottom turns founders and executives into LinkedIn video creators.
- Max Menke helps companies, startups, and countries commercialize innovation and get products to market.
- Kelly Irving is a book editor and publishing strategist who helps authors make book ideas better.
- Bryan Whitefield helps organizations make smarter, faster decisions.
- Lisa Evans helps leaders transform their public speaking and storytelling skills for greater impact.
- Derek Edmond helps B2B companies generate results in search engines.
- Matt Church is a mentor and trusted advisor to thought leaders and global influencers.

These personal statements are sticky, clear, and short. They’re easy to remember, easy to understand, and hard to forget. Here’s mine:

- Caelan Huntress helps experts and entrepreneurs set up smart marketing systems.

My personal statement clearly defines what I do and how I do it. You know after one quick read if I’m the type of person you hire or follow. I don’t talk about my fire juggling skills or my blockchain proficiency because I don’t want to muddy the message when I’m giving someone my introduction.
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How a Personal Statement Gives You Momentum

The first few years in business are the hardest. You’re trying to figure out how you make money, who you serve, what you’re doing for them, and how to talk about it. After a while, people start coming to you out of nowhere. They talked with someone you barely remember, and they happen to be facing exactly the kind of problem that you’re best suited to solve. Referrals become common. You don’t have to hustle so hard.

Your personal statement plants seeds among your weak ties, and over time those seeds will sprout into referrals. Counterintuitively, the effectiveness of your reputation relies on the strength of your weak ties, not on your direct connections.

In his landmark sociology paper “The Strength of Weak Ties,” Stanford professor and sociologist Mark Granovetter surveyed 282 workers in Boston and found that 84% of them had gotten their job through a weak-tie relationship.¹ Weak ties are acquaintances who know you but aren’t close to you. You may go weeks, months, or even years without speaking to one another, but you would answer their call or reply to their email.

Having a large circle of acquaintances, Granovetter argued, is better for discovering opportunities. Your weak ties talk with dozens (or hundreds) of people who aren’t connected to you at all. Those weak ties can remember you when something relevant comes up in their wider network. Your close friends and family members — people who you see regularly — don’t have access to an entirely separate network of people, but your weak ties do, and they may have heard something they can pass on to you.

Your Personal Statement

If your personal statement is sticky, clear, and short, then your weak ties will continually share your work with their separate networks of contacts.

Copy-Paste Copywriting Process

One of the fastest ways I know to iterate your way to success is with copy-paste copywriting. This is the secret to being a good copywriter. I don’t start content from scratch. I start with a formula. Sometimes I develop these formulas myself. Sometimes I reverse-engineer formulas from content I find out in the wilds of the internet. This is a simple process I’ve used for years to develop great content quickly.

1. Find the formula
2. Fill in the blanks
3. Fix the flow
4. Repeat

If I’m writing a bio for a client, for example, here’s a formula I’d use:

NAME is the TITLE at COMPANY. She is a ADJECTIVE and ADJECTIVE ROLE, ROLE, and ROLE whose insight is grounded in over NUMBER years of experience as a successful ROLE, ROLE, and specialist in OUTCOME.

In many of my Cornerstone Workbooks, you can double-click on words in CAPS to replace them with your own customized text. When I use this formula for myself, this is what I get:

Caelan Huntress is the Creative Director at Stellar Platforms. He is a brilliant and dynamic speaker, trainer, and business coach whose insight is grounded in over 15 years of experience as a successful stage performer, direct-response copywriter, and specialist in digital marketing automation.

As you develop your own positioning for your platform, pay attention to the positioning of others. Take notes. And use formulas because they allow you to create your positioning content quickly.
ACTION STEPS FOR ELEVATING YOUR PLATFORM

Complete the exercises in the Cornerstone Workbooks at MarketingYourselfBook.com/workbooks:

1. Use the first workbook’s opening exercises to write about yourself, your audience, and your solution.

2. Write a bio (longer written version), an elevator pitch (shorter verbal version), and a personal statement (sticky, clear, and short).

3. Share your personal statement with friends and colleagues. Ask for feedback. Revise it a few times.

4. Change your headlines on your social profiles and website.