

Background:

The number of pharmacy graduates is quickly outpacing the demand for pharmacists as 2007 projection forecasted a total of 304,986 pharmacists in the workforce by 2020 and this projection was met earlier than projected in 2016.² In this saturated job market for pharmacy, it will be imperative that prospective pharmacists understand how to self-brand their core professional and interpersonal attributes in a competent and cohesive manner to get the compensation and occupation that they desire. A quantifiable measure that allows prospective candidates to differentiate themselves from other qualified individuals is their personal brand equity (PBE). Gorbotav and colleagues defined PBE as “an individual's perception of the value of one's personal brand derived from its appeal, differentiation, and recognition in professional field”.³

Objective:

The purpose of this innovational study is to evaluate the personal brand equity of pharmacy faculty and staff and to assess the impact of them attending a professional development workshop.

Methods:

The personal branding workshop was led by a professor of marketing in the School of Business and facilitated by a professor of pharmacy practice trained in personal branding. The purpose of the workshop was to assess the participants' knowledge of personal branding and to educate them on tools that could be used to enhance their personal branding. The main objectives of the workshop were to define personal branding and discuss its importance, provide steps that could be taken to elevate one's personal brand and how to extend personal brand to an institutional context. The Qualtrics electronic survey consisted of Likert-type questions (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree) and qualitative questions.

Results:

A total of fourteen participants attended the workshop and were offered the option to complete the post-survey. The response rate was 100%. According to the quantitative survey responses, most participants responded positively to the questions used to assess their brand appeal. The pharmacy faculty and staff greatly agreed with that they had a positive professional image and

that their professional strengths were clear as 92.9% either strongly or somewhat agreed with both statements. Similarly, majority of the participants responded positively to the questions used to assess their brand differentiation. The participants greatly agreed with having a reputation for producing high value results and providing access to their network by working with them as 78.6% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with both statements. In addition, the participants also heavily agreed that their work was highly valued by others, and they were considered preferred candidates for projects and tasks as 71.4% responded strongly or somewhat agreed to these statements. In contrast, the participants were split about being regarded as delivering higher professional value compared to others as 7 participants strongly or somewhat agreed and 7 participants neither agreed or disagreed with the statement or somewhat disagreed with the statement. Likewise, majority of participants responded positively to the questions assessing their brand recognition. Majority of the participants agreed that they were regarded as a professional expert and to being frequently recommended by professional contacts as 71.4% either strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements. Comparatively, 64.3% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they were known outside of their immediate network while 57.1% either strongly or somewhat agreed that they were frequently contacted for advice and services. Conversely, only 35.7% of participants strongly or somewhat agreed that they were well-known in their profession. Attendees were also asked about the number of current connections they had on LinkedIn and 33% didn't utilize the professional social media site, 7.1% responded that they had less than 100 connections, 57.1% responded that they had 100-500 connections, and 7.1% responded they had over 1000 connections. The workshop was well received by the attendees as 57.1% either strongly or somewhat agreed that the professional development workshop provided me with new information about personal brand. Additionally, 57.1% of the attendees also either strongly or somewhat agreed that was valuable and met their expectations. The participants were also asked about ways that they wanted to improve their personal brand and some of their responses included adding more detail to their LinkedIn profiles, engaging more at professional conferences, developing a motto for their personal brand, and making more connections within their professional organizations. In contrast, some participants acknowledged that they had no plans to improve their personal brand at this time. that they were trying to scale it back due to being over-extended, or that they felt uncomfortable growing their personal brand due to potential conflicts with affecting their team.

Conclusion:

The personal brand workshop was positively received by the pharmacy faculty and staff. This workshop was successful in improving the knowledge base of the participants on the concept of personal brand equity and was valuable in providing information about how to improve their own personal brand. However, further research in the field of personal brand equity in pharmacy are needed to substantiate the findings of this study.