From corporate leader to sought-after expert

Building your personal brand alongside your firm: your topics, your LinkedIn, your speaker page and the order to build them in.

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From Corporate Leader to Sought-After Expert: A Guide to Building Your Personal Brand Alongside Your Firm

Building your personal brand alongside your firm: your topics, your LinkedIn, your speaker page and the order to build them in.

Your firm and your personal brand do different jobs. Clients hire the firm. Your name is what event hosts book, companies bring in for workshops, boards invite to advise and readers follow. Former corporate leaders build both fastest when they point at the same expertise: a few clear topics drawn from what you led, shown consistently on your firm's website, a speaker page and LinkedIn.

This guide walks through the whole path: translating corporate experience, choosing signature topics, turning them into offers, setting up LinkedIn, a speaker page and a board bio, and the order to build it all in. Worksheets are included so you can work through it as you read.

IN SHORT

An executive personal brand is the reputation attached to your name, separate from any title or employer. For a former corporate leader building a firm, it's how people know what you're an expert in, what you speak on and why your experience matters to them now.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Work through chapters 3 and 4 first; everything else builds on your topics and point of view. Chapter 11 gives you a 90-day order to build the rest.

01

Why Corporate Experience Doesn't Translate on Its Own

Inside a company, your title and employer said everything. “Senior Vice President of Talent” told colleagues your scope, your authority and your track record. Outside, those words lose most of their meaning. An event host or prospective client doesn’t buy a title. They buy a solution to a problem they have.

That’s why the first step isn’t a logo or a website. It’s translating what you led into what you help with. “Former SVP of Talent” becomes “helps leadership teams keep their best people through a reorganization.” The experience is the same. The framing is about the buyer.

There’s a second challenge: confidentiality. Much of your best work happened under agreements you’ll keep. That doesn’t leave you with nothing to say. Patterns, frameworks and lessons travel; company names and private details don’t need to.

02

Your Firm vs Your Name

	Your firm	Your personal brand
Who it’s for	Clients who hire the firm for a defined outcome	Event hosts, companies, boards, media and readers
What they buy	Projects, programs and advisory work	Keynotes, workshops, board service, books and ideas
Where it lives	The firm’s website, Google profile and company page	LinkedIn, a speaker page, podcasts, articles and events
Proof	Client results and case studies	Talks, topics, recommendations and visibility
What connects them	The same expertise and point of view	The same expertise and point of view

When the two connect, each feeds the other. A keynote leads to a workshop request. A workshop leads to an advisory engagement. A firm engagement becomes the basis for a talk.

03

Choose Three Signature Topics

Event hosts and boards respond to clarity. Three well-defined topics beat a long list of things you could speak on.

1. **List the problems you solved again and again**

   Not your responsibilities. The problems you were called in to fix.

2. **Name who has those problems now**

   Which leaders, teams or organizations face them today, and in what situations?

3. **Write each topic in the buyer's words**

   "Keeping your best people through a reorganization" lands faster than "talent retention strategy."

4. **Check demand**

   Would an association, employer or conference put this on an agenda this year?

5. **Keep three**

   Park the rest. You can add topics once these are known.

Use this worksheet to draft yours:

	Problem I solved repeatedly	Who has it now	Topic in their words
Topic 1			
Topic 2			
Topic 3			

Here's how that looks in practice. These are illustrative examples, not real people:

> FORMER HEAD OF HR
>
> Topic: "Keeping your best people through a reorganization." Audience: leadership teams and

> HR associations in companies going through change.

> FORMER CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
>
> Topic: “Scaling without burning out your managers.” Audience: founders and operating leaders past their first hundred employees.

> FORMER SALES EXECUTIVE
>
> Topic: “Building a sales culture after the founder steps back.” Audience: founder-led companies handing off sales leadership.

04

Develop Your Point of View

A topic gets you considered. A point of view gets you remembered. For each topic, write down what you believe that others in your field get wrong, and why your experience taught you differently.

Topic	The common belief	What I’ve seen instead
Topic 1		
Topic 2		
Topic 3		

Keep each answer to a sentence or two. It becomes the opening of your talks, the hook in your posts and the reason a board member remembers you.

05

Turn Topics Into Offers

Every topic can support a ladder of offers, from visibility to paid work:

Level	Format	What it does
Visibility	Podcast guest spots, articles, LinkedIn posts	Gets your name and topic in front of the right people
Keynote	A 30- to 60-minute talk	Introduces your point of view to a room of buyers
Workshop	A half day or full day with a team	Turns ideas into practice; often paid by the organization
Advisory or firm engagement	A project, program or retainer	Delivers the outcome, usually through your firm

Plan the next step for every talk before you give it. See how to price consulting services after a corporate career.

06

Set Up LinkedIn for Event Hosts and Boards

LinkedIn is where most people check you out after hearing your name. Set it up to confirm your expertise in seconds:

- **Headline:** what you help with and who you help, not "Former SVP at..."
- **About:** your point of view, your three topics, the formats you offer and how to reach you
- **Featured section:** your speaker page, a talk clip and a strong article or post
- **Experience:** your firm first, with your corporate roles as context underneath
- **Posts:** regular, focused on your three topics
- **Recommendations:** from people who've seen you lead, speak or advise

A simple headline formula: *I help [who] [achieve what] | Keynotes and workshops on [topic] | Founder, [firm]*.

07

Build a Speaker Page and One-Sheet

A speaker page, and a one-page PDF version called a one-sheet, answers an event host's questions without a call:

- Your three topics, each with a title, a short description and audience takeaways
- Audiences you speak to and formats you offer
- A short bio and a longer one, ready to copy
- Headshots to download
- A short video clip of you speaking
- Organizations you've spoken for, shared with permission
- An inquiry form asking for the date, audience, format and location

More in how to become a keynote speaker after a corporate career.

08

Write a Board-Ready Bio

If board service is part of your plan, you need a different document: a one-page bio written for nominating committees. Lead with two or three areas of expertise, then governance experience, the strategic decisions you shaped, the industries and company stages you know, and any board or advisory roles. More in how to get on a board of directors.

09

Create Content That Compounds

Content keeps your topics visible between talks. A sustainable monthly rhythm:

Each month	What to do
One deeper piece	An article or newsletter issue on one of your topics
Four short posts	Each pulling one idea from the deeper piece
One conversation	A podcast, panel or event where you share the topic live
One follow-up	Send the deeper piece to a few people who'd value it

More in how to create a content strategy for growing firms.

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Where Your Personal Brand Lives

In most cases, start with your firm's website rather than a separate personal site. A speaking page and a detailed about page on the firm's site keep your visibility, links and search authority in one place, and they show visitors how your name and your firm connect. A separate personal site makes more sense later, when your name has an audience of its own, such as a book or a large speaking business.

> A PATTERN I SEE OFTEN
>
> A former executive launches a firm, and her LinkedIn headline still leads with her previous title. Event hosts who hear her name can't tell what she speaks on, and inquiries are vague. Once she names three topics, adds a speaker page and updates her headline, requests start naming a specific talk, and several lead to workshops for the same organizations.

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The Order to Build It In: A 90-Day Plan

1. **Weeks 1–2: Topics and point of view**

Complete the worksheets in chapters 3 and 4.

2. **Weeks 3–4: LinkedIn**

   Rewrite your headline, About and Featured section around your topics.

3. **Weeks 5–6: Offers**

   Map each topic to a keynote, a workshop and a firm engagement.

4. **Weeks 7–8: Website**

   Add a speaker page and update your about page on the firm's site.

5. **Weeks 9–10: First stages**

   Pitch three associations, podcasts or former colleagues' companies.

6. **Weeks 11–13: Proof**

   Record a talk, collect host comments and write your board bio if relevant.

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Mistakes That Slow Former Corporate Leaders Down

- Leading with past titles instead of the problems you solve now
- Offering too many topics, so no one remembers any of them
- Building a personal brand and a firm brand that don't connect
- Waiting for a book before you start speaking
- Posting about everything instead of your three topics
- Holding back stories because of confidentiality, when patterns and lessons work just as well

If you're building a firm around leadership, people or organizations, see how we work with former corporate leaders. Firm Forward covers the brand, website and LinkedIn from the ground up, and our Focus Projects start with one piece, such as your offers or your LinkedIn presence.

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Questions About Personal Branding for Executives

Do I need a personal brand if I already have a firm?

If you want speaking, workshops, board roles or a book, yes. Those opportunities come to a person, not a company. Your personal brand also brings clients to the firm.

Do I name my firm after myself or give it a separate name?

It depends on whether you want the firm to grow beyond you. A separate firm name gives you room to add a team or sell the business later; your own name works well for a practice built around you.

Do I need a separate personal website?

Not at first. A speaking page and a detailed about page on your firm's site are usually enough.

How do I get my first speaking engagements?

Start where people already know you: industry associations, alumni networks, former colleagues' companies, employee resource groups, podcasts and local business groups.

Is it fine to mention my former employer?

Generally, yes, as factual context about your experience, as long as you stay within any agreements you signed. Lead with what you help with now.

About Elite Vivant

Elite Vivant is a strategy-led branding and marketing firm. We work with independent financial professionals and former corporate leaders to build the brand and marketing for their firm and their personal brand.

Next step

Book a Brand & Growth Call at elitevivant.com. In 20 minutes, we'll look at where your firm stands and what to fix first.

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