

Building credibility and your personal brand

BY KYLE KRYSALOWICH

Members of the Company of Young Professionals — **The Vancouver Board of Trade's** under-35 program — kicked off their first post-summer event on Sept. 16 with an interactive and self-reflective session about building a personal brand and credibility for career progression. The session revolved around three main aspects to building brand and credibility: consistency, clarity, and authenticity.

The session, led by Dr. **Tara Cree**, began with a discussion on brands that everyone is familiar with, such as **Starbucks** and **Tim Hortons**. Cree asked participants, "What do these brands mean to you? What makes these brands powerful?" Those in attendance soon realized that a brand is often not controlled by you, but instead, is defined by the people around you.

Since one cannot control what other people think, attendees were encouraged to be proactive, in an effort to manage and shape their personal brand. Whether it's your daily choice of clothes, how you act, or what skills you acquire, all of these factors contribute to

your distinct and unique brand, said Cree. The reality, she added, is that having a brand is not an option — but managing it properly is.

CYP members learned that managing your personal brand is not an easy task and takes time. Cree recommended the following steps to create an effective personal brand:

Know yourself. Take some time to consider your deepest values, discover your passions, determine your greatest talents and skills, and explore your personality.

Articulate vision. Determine where you want to be in the next five years and revise this as often as you need to. This is an important question to ask and visualize, as this will give you a target to aim at when establishing your brand.

Define your brand. An integration of what you are passionate about and how you spend your time is key to ensuring that your brand is defined and recognized by others. A disconnect between these two things is apparent and can have a negative impact on your brand.

Live your brand. Get out there and be yourself!



Dr. Tara Cree speaks to members of The Vancouver Board of Trade's Company of Young Professionals program on Sept. 16. The program focuses on developing under-35 professionals in the early stages of their careers. **Photo by Noravera Visuals**

Closely tied with your brand is your credibility. As Cree told those in attendance, "credibility is like currency — it is hard to earn but easy to lose."

Establishing your credibility goes hand in hand with your brand. Formal credentials, a proven track record, and a sense of authenticity are just a few of the many ways that one can build

credibility. Alternatively, insincerity, arrogance, and breaking commitments all can tarnish one's professional credibility.

As the session drew to a close, Cree reemphasized that building a brand and credibility are crucial in business — especially for those who are just beginning their careers.

The Company of Young Pro-

fessionals (CYP) is a leadership development program of The Vancouver Board of Trade that connects emerging young professionals in Greater Vancouver. CYP members are committed to improving the community, creating strong relationships, developing themselves and developing the people around them. For more info, visit boardoftrade.com/CYP.



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