



This Is Your Life Podcast
Season 1, Episode 11
Published: September 17, 2014

Michael Hyatt

Michele Cushatt: Welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to give you the clarity, courage, and commitment you need to do what matters. My name is Michele Cushatt, and I'm your cohost today. I'm sitting in the studio with Michael Hyatt. Hi, Michael.

Michael Hyatt: Hey, Michele.

Michele: As we all know, the marketplace is crowded. In fact, every day it seems to get more and more crowded, right?

Michael: Absolutely. There's more noise than ever before, more distractions, more channels... Yeah, lots of stuff.

Michele: It's so hard for those of us who are trying to build a business in this very crowded marketplace to get our message (what we have to offer, what we really believe in) to stand out and get noticed, get heard. Regardless of how unique we think our offering is, there's really nothing new under the sun, right?

Michael: It's true.

Michele: There's a good chance there's somebody who's doing at least something similar.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: We try to innovate, but there is. So how do we get ourselves to stand out? That's where we start talking about the idea of a personal brand, about branding. Now I live in Colorado, as you know, and in Colorado we do have lots of ranches everywhere, so when I think of brand, I think of that little... What do you call it? See, I'm not a rancher.

Michael: I can see that.

Michele: But you know a brand is something ranchers use to mark their livestock with a symbol or maybe the initials of their name or whatever it may be to mark it as theirs. That's what the brand is all about, so that way people know they own it. When it comes to our brand, we do something similar. We don't mark ourselves. You don't have an image or logo on your arm, do you?

Michael: Not even a tattoo.

Michele: Not even a tattoo.

Michael: Although that's a good idea.

Michele: When it comes to branding our business, our brand is how we package what we offer. We market, so that way it's unique to us, and in a sense the world knows we own it, right?

Michael: Right.

Michele: Did I explain that well?

Michael: Well, yeah. I think a brand is certainly something we own, but it's also something we stand for. When I think of the world's greatest brands, when I think of Apple computers for example, I think of "computers for the rest of us," computers that are easy to use, that are intuitive, that are simple, that don't have a lot of junk on them that I don't need. It's something I can get my work done with.

That's what they stand for. Or if I think of Nike, I think of a brand that's about "just doing it," athletic wear that doesn't get in my way, that helps me just do it. So yeah, it's what we own. It's what we stand for. It's what people remember us for. I did that on the fly. I didn't have notes on that. I just thought of those brands, and that's what I think of because that's how I remember them.

Michele: So it has accomplished what it set out to do.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: So without a brand, what is the risk? What can happen to us as leaders or entrepreneurs or businesspeople?

Michael: Yeah, it's that we'll basically stand for nothing. People won't know what we stand for. We'll be undifferentiated in the market and will therefore be forgettable. We'll be overlooked.

Michele: Now you've worked for a long time to establish your brand. How would you describe your brand?

Michael: Well, I think my brand is really about...as we said at the top of this show...doing what matters. Life is not about drifting and about going with the current, but it's about being intentional and being proactive and doing what matters most. It's not just getting things done, and this was an important distinction for me in the evolution of my brand. I wasn't just about productivity and getting things done, but I want to get the *right* things done, and I want to help the people I communicate with get the right things done.

Michele: So the brand not only communicates to your audience, but it also helps you kind of stay on track with what you're all about.

Michael: Totally. In fact, I would say the biggest benefit of a brand when you understand the brand is it's an internal guidance system that keeps everybody aligned and everybody moving on script, so to speak.

Michele: Okay. All right, so was your establishing a brand something you sat down with one day and said, "Oh, I think this is going to be my brand"?

Michael: Well, yeah, I did do that, and that lasted about two years. If you go back...and I encourage people to do this...in a service you can find on Google called the Wayback Machine at www.archive.org (we'll put the correct link in the show notes), essentially what you can do is go back and see how websites appeared...the same website, the URL, like www.michaelhyatt.com...all the way back to the inception.

Michele: Oh, that's almost painful to think about.

Michael: It's totally painful. It's embarrassing, because you'll see if you do that on my own particular brand that when I started, I had a blog on Typepad called *Working Smarter*, and it was all about productivity. I was really interested in productivity, but after about two years, I got bored. Then I decided... By this time I was the president of Thomas Nelson Publishers.

I wasn't the CEO yet, but I was the president. I thought I'd give people a peek behind the curtain of publishing, the mysterious world of publishing, so I had a blog called *From Where I Sit*. This was all still under www.michaelhyatt.com, but it was totally different branding. Then, a couple of years later, I was learning so much about leadership in my role that I thought, "Well, publishing doesn't really say it either. What I'm really interested in now is leading on purpose."

For a while, that was kind of what my brand was about. Then it evolved from there. So even though I thought I knew what the brand was, it revealed itself over time, and I'm pretty sure that what I have now is probably not the end game. It'll continue to evolve.

Michele: Yeah, I've noticed the same even with my own brand.

Michael: Have you?

Michele: It evolves over time. I just didn't know on the first day or the first year.

Michael: What did you start with? I've told my story. You tell yours.

Michele: You know, I'm trying to remember. I don't even know that I remember. It was something similar to *Dare to Live* or something like that.

Michael: Mm. Kind of inspirational?

Michele: There was kind of a thread... Yeah, somewhat inspirational, but I didn't really know what that was. It was kind of nebulous. "What does that really mean?"

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: "What does that look like? What am I offering?" So it really took some time. Actually, it took some blogging and writing.

Michael: I know!

Michele: Because that's how I process in order to kind of identify what my brand is all about.

Michael: Me too. Yep.

Michele: I guess you just answered this. Does your brand stay, or is it something you need to periodically evaluate and see if you need to rebrand?

Michael: Well, there are a couple of things. One is that as your interests change and evolve and you get new information, you might find yourself getting more narrowly niched or more focused on the core audience you're after, and that has certainly happened to me. I distinguish between branding and rebranding in this way. A rebrand is just kind of like a brand refresh where maybe the graphics you've used, to pick an example, are no longer current. So for a while, Apple used the kind of graphic design that they call *skeuomorphism* in all of their brands.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: I can't believe I pulled that out.

Michele: Yeah, I can't believe you did either. Can you spell it though? Can you spell it?

Michael: Yeah... No. I would flunk the spelling bee. But it's basically where you take objects from the physical world and you give them a representation in the digital world so that they look like they're physical counterparts. You create, for example, the illusion of 3D.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Well then, not too long ago, maybe about a year ago, Apple came out with what I think was iOS 7, and they said, "Forget skeuomorphism. We're going to go to this flat design. Why do we need to replicate what's in the real world in the digital world? This is an entire world of its own." So that explains all of the flat design, which is all the rage now. People are rebranding websites, and a lot of design is picking up on this. That hasn't really changed anything about the brand. It's simply a refresh so it's more current and communicates with people where they are.

Michele: As we began this whole conversation, we said our goal is to help you build your brand, because obviously if you don't have your own unique signature in the marketplace, both for yourself and for your audience, you'll be kind of like a rudderless ship, right?

Michael: Right. You have to go first. You have to tell people what you're about, what you stand for, and that's really the art of branding. If you don't do that, it's not like you won't have a brand, because you will have a reputation. People will just formulate their own opinions of what you're about, so you have to drive the narrative, and that's really what branding is about: driving that narrative.

Michele: Okay, for those who are listening, whether you are doing a rebrand (trying to kind of reinvent yourself or rediscover exactly where you're headed) or you're developing a brand for the first time... Why don't you tell us how to do that.

Michael: Yeah. There is something I do at Platform University (actually, my daughter Megan and I do this, because she's the dean of Platform University) called a Member Makeover. Once a month, people from our community volunteer to have us review their online platforms and their brands. I still can't believe people do this, because it's not always a pleasant process.

We tend to be pretty hard on them, though (I hope) gracious when we do it. What we've found is we keep coming back to the same five elements that have to be present in a brand for it to be powerful, and if one of these is missing, it can really handicap you in a significant way. That's how I think about it. It's around this framework of these five elements of a powerful personal brand.

Michele: Okay, five elements. Walk us through those.

Michael: Okay. Element number one is a *defined audience*. This is where it starts. The reason it's number one is that it is the priority. People try to create a brand without consideration of their existing audience, and it may be that you only have an audience of five, or it may be 5,000, or it may be 5 million, but you have to get in touch with who the audience is.

Now I had this experience as a blogger when I started in 2004. In the first year, I had an average of about 100 unique monthly visitors, and then it doubled the next year and doubled the next year. It took me four years to get over 1,000 readers a month, and then it really took off.

Michele: Four years.

Michael: Four years.

Michele: For those of you who have just started blogging, four years.

Michael: I know. I was in the slow class.

Michele: No. I mean, it takes that long. It really does.

Michael: Well, it's faster today.

Michele: It is.

Michael: It's faster today because... If I had known then what I know now, it would have been faster, and there are a lot of people who have done it faster, but that's how long it took.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: But I hit an inflection point in 2008 when my traffic suddenly spiked to an average of 20,000 unique monthly visitors, and the reason that happened is that I went through a Copernican Revolution. I was at the center of my blogging universe prior to that. I was talking about what was important to me, why I cared, and it was all about me. In the early days of blogging, it was all about journaling online. Therapy.

Michele: It was a web log, you know? An online... Yeah, exactly.

Michael: But in 2008, I went through this shift where I said, "Okay, forget me. What's important to my audience? Why should they care?" because as it turns out, most people are tuned in (this is the most popular radio station on earth) to WIIFM, "What's in it for me?"

Michele: Wow. I've never heard that before.

Michael: When you can tune into that as a content creator or as a brand builder and say, "How can I articulate this in terms of what's in it for them?" everything changes.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: So what we recommend at Platform University and what I would recommend to the people who are listening is a simple reader survey or a listener survey or a customer survey...something that gives the people you're trying to connect with a voice into the process. That's where I would begin. I recommend and use a product called SurveyMonkey.

I don't have an affiliate deal with them, but I use them, and it's not very expensive. Once a year, I do a reader survey, and I simply post that on my site. I invite people to participate, but here's what I don't say: "Come fill out my 53-question survey." What I say is, "I'm committed to creating the best product I can for you, so help me help you by responding to this brief survey."

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: "That'll give me the information I need to make sure I'm meeting your needs." I'm framing even my asking people to do the survey from the reader's or the customer's perspective. Then, in addition to that, I pull all of that information together once I have the survey results. By the way, the information you get can be astonishing.

Michele: Mm-hmm. I bet it's surprising.

Michael: Oh yeah.

Michele: I'm sure there are some things that are expected, but there has to be tons of information that comes through that you didn't expect.

Michael: Well, there is, and I meant to cover this, so let me go back and grab it. I ask two kinds of questions. I want to find out demographic information, which is the basic statistical information. Things like gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, income, and so forth are the demographic information. That's helpful, but it's not the most useful. What I'm really after is the psychographic information.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: What makes people do what they do? In particular, I'm looking for their challenges, I'm looking for their aspirations, and I'm looking for their habits. People who are listening to this can go to my 2013 Reader Survey, my most recent one, and you can actually see the questions I asked. Unfortunately, I did ask 53 questions. Now I can do that because I have a long-standing relationship with my customers or with my readers, and they'll do that. I would recommend not going above about 10 or 12 questions, but ask open-ended questions.

Michele: Is that 10-12 questions including the demographic questions as well?

Michael: Yep. Yep.

Michele: I mean, 10-12 questions total?

Michael: Yep. Start small until you build trust, and then you can go deeper.

Michele: Got it.

Michael: But even with that, I had like 3,500 people respond to it, so it's a lot of information. Ask open-ended questions, questions that say, "What are your pain points? What do you struggle with on a regular basis?" and let them tell you, because not only are you looking for the information...and this is key...but you're looking for the language they use to describe the problems they have, or you're looking for the language they use to describe the dreams they have.

Because when you create the content, when you create your brand, you want them to feel like, "Oh my gosh. He's reading my mail. How is he inside my head? How does he realize what I'm thinking?" When you do that, you create a connection, and you create this first element of a powerful personal brand.

Michele: So when you talk about defining your audience as part of that first key element of defining your personal brand, you're not just talking about whether they're male, female, old, or young. You really are getting into the heart and the mind of your audience.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: You truly could say, "My typical audience member looks like this," and you could describe that person to me.

Michael: Yeah. You could even go the extra step with that too, which is creating a customer avatar or avatars for customers who are sort of your typical customers, so when I'm writing an article, I'm writing to Fred, and I have the demographic and the psychographic description of him, so I know exactly what that target is.

Michele: It's so interesting because we do this in the writing world. When we write books, we do something similar. We really try to think about, "Who is the person I'm writing this for? Who is my audience?"

Michael: Yep. It's a similar process.

Michele: I mean, it really is.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: It's just another product, your blog or book or whatever it is, right?

Michael: It is.

Michele: You design it with that person in mind. The more information you have, the better you can craft that in order to meet their needs.

Michael: Yeah. Exactly right.

Michele: Okay, what's the second element of a personal brand?

Michael: The second element... Once you know who your audience is and that's defined, then you need to *move to a clear value proposition*. This is where you decide and determine what it is you have to offer this audience, because it's all about serving the audience and adding value to that audience segment. What you're after is something that clearly differentiates you in a very crowded world where people are suffering from a lack of time.

I have something I call the *value equation* that I encourage. We've taken clients through this. We've done this at Platform University. Here's what it looks like. The value equation, if I had to spell it out... I

actually have a graphic that shows this which you won't be able to see. Actually, maybe we could show this on the video.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: I'm going to give you an example in a minute, so just write this down if you're listening.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Your professional identity plus the target audience plus your unique solution equals your specific transformation. People don't buy products. They don't buy services. They buy a transformation they expect as a result of using your product or your service. Let me say it another way. Here's something I call...and this is very similar...a *core value proposition template*.

As you begin to give language to this and begin to express it, here's what it might look like. "I am..." This is your professional identity. "I help..." This is your target audience. "...do or understand..." This is your unique solution. "...so..." This is your promised transformation. That all probably sounds pretty abstract, pretty ethereal, so let me give it as something concrete. You want to be able to repeat this (if you had to) at a cocktail party or at a mixer.

Michele: Yeah, when people ask, "What do you do?"

Michael: Yeah. "What do you do?"

Michele: You get asked that all the time. You have to be prepared to answer that.

Michael: That's right. So here's an example from one of our clients.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: "I'm a speaker and trainer. I help school administrators inspire their students to strive for a big future so they have a reason to make wise choices today."

Michele: Oh, nice!

Michael: She was trying to sell an anti-drug program, and she was trying to give the vision to principals and superintendents, and that's what she came up with.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Here's another one. It said, "I'm an author and a speaker. I help motivated but overwhelmed husbands and fathers learn how to lead and love their families so they can have lasting, fulfilling marriages and meaningful influence on their kids."

Michele: I like that. He creates a sense of tension in the beginning by connecting with the overwhelmed.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: It's the father who wants to do really well but he's overwhelmed.

Michael: He understands his audience.

Michele: Yeah, so he has a connection with the tension there, and then he has a deliverable promise at the end.

Michael: Here's another one. This is one of my favorite ones. This happens to be Shawn Lemon, my son-in-law. Megan and I worked with him as he was starting his new business. He said, "I'm a technology lifestyle coach. I design custom productivity systems for successful but overwhelmed business leaders so they can regain a sense of control and focus on what matters most."

Michele: Oh, nice!

Michael: www.shawnlemon.com. Had to get that plug in.

Michele: You're welcome, Shawn. That's great!

Michael: So you want to literally write this out, and I'm going to tell you this takes a lot of work. Of all of the things we do in our work when we're helping companies or individuals with branding, getting this clear value proposition is the most difficult but the most important. Usually you need some help, maybe from some people who are part of your team or maybe some people who are outsiders. I couldn't even do this for myself. I had to bring in some other people to figure it out.

Michele: Yeah, I'm the same. I kind of need some other sources to help reflect it back to me, talk, get it going.

Michael: Yep. Kind of wear it for a while, you know?

Michele: Yeah, because I'm too much in my head when I try to come up with those kinds of things.

Michael: I know. Me too.

Michele: I need somebody else. How much time are you talking about? You said it can take a long time.

Michael: Well, you can do this in a couple of hours, like that one we did with Shawn. He came over to the house one day, and he said, "Guys, I really need some help figuring this out." He had heard me talk about this.

Michele: Uh-huh.

Michael: I said, "Great." It probably took us two hours. We played with a couple of different things. We got it on a white board. We crossed things out. We tried different things, and then he sat with it for maybe two weeks, and he made some tweaks and came back to us and said, "What do you think of this?" We said, "Buddy, you nailed it."

Michele: Nice. He got gold. Good.

Michael: And it's driving his business because when he articulates that, people go, "Oh, I need a lifestyle technology coach."

Michele: Well, it's because he has done such a great job connecting with the needs of the audience and then delivering exactly what they need.

Michael: Yeah. Exactly.

Michele: Okay, so that is the second element of developing a personal brand. Take us to the third.

Michael: Okay. The third element is *a compelling brand slogan*. As we've said, we live in a busy, noisy world where people's attention spans are growing shorter by the year.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: When they hit your website, if they don't see something with which they connect immediately...I mean, you have like two seconds to live...they bounce off because there are too many other squirrels in cyberspace. You know, "Squirrel!" and then they're off to the next thing. A tagline is one way to grab that.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: When we're talking about taking that defined audience the value proposition and reducing it to a tagline, what we recommend is that you start first with a verb or a gerund. I'm going to give you some examples, so you don't have to know what those terms mean, necessarily.

Michele: Okay. For those who are grammar challenged like me...

Michael: Yeah. It could be as simple as this. Let's just take this website, one of my favorite websites, www.michelecushatt.com.

Michele: Aww. I've never heard of her.

Michael: Michele starts with a gerund, *making*. It's a verb with an -ing on the end. "Making peace with an imperfect life." Now if I'm someone who is trying to manage a family that's not perfect, who has a career and a very entrepreneurial husband like you have, and I see this tagline, I go, "Bingo! This is for me!"

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: “I’m somebody who is trying to make peace with an imperfect life.” I love your tagline.

Michele: Thank you!

Michael: That’s so awesome.

Michele: Thank you. It took a while to come up with that, although I am thinking about changing a couple of words, but it’s still going to be mostly the same.

Michael: Okay, here’s another gerund. We use our friend Chris LoCurto’s tagline as an example everywhere, but it’s, “Finding the life & business you really want.”

Michele: Mm. Mm-hmm. *Finding*... Again, that -ing.

Michael: *Gerund*. That’s right. If you’re after that, then his tagline would make sense to you. Here’s another example, and this is just a simple verb. This is Seth Godin. “Go make something happen.”

Michele: Oh, I like that.

Michael: I do too. It’s simple, minimal.

Michele: You know, both Chris and Seth... Well, Chris had the word *you*, “...the life... *you* really want.”

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: I really like that, but in “Go make something happen,” the *you* is implied as well.

Michael: It is. One last example I’ll give you is from Mixergy, from my friend Andrew Warner. I’m in a MasterMind with Andrew. He has this tagline for Mixergy: “Learn from proven entrepreneurs.” He has done over a thousand video interviews with entrepreneurs, so “Learn from proven entrepreneurs...” For somebody like me who is an entrepreneur... I want that. *Bing*. I’m on the right site.

Michele: It’s very active. Mm-hmm. Even that *proven* word in there just ups the tension a little bit more.

Michael: Yeah. It does.

Michele: It’s kind of the hook. It makes me go, “*Proven* entrepreneurs? Okay. I’m in.”

Michael: So that’s another example of something that you’re probably not just going to get in 15 minutes of thinking about it.

Michele: No. It takes time.

Michael: You have to play with it. You have to test it. I've gone through so many taglines in my own blog.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: But to get to one that really has power takes some time, just like the value proposition.

Michele: It may only be a handful of words, but as a writer, a wordsmithy kind of person, I think it's interesting. Just the right word with the right consonance...

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: All of that matters, so you play with it and you toy with it and you test it on different people. Eventually you get there, but it takes some time.

Michael: It takes a little bit of time. Yeah.

Michele: Okay. So far, as far as these five elements, we have a defined audience, a clear value proposition, and a compelling brand slogan. What's next?

Michael: Number four is an *engaging headshot*. In this particular case, we're talking about personal brands, and when I say personal, I don't mean it's unrelated to your corporation.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: When I was at Thomas Nelson, I built a personal brand there that I think really enhanced the value of the company, frankly, because I gave a face, a name, a personality, and a voice to the corporate brand.

Michele: You made it human.

Michael: I made it human. Exactly. Before that, it was basically a company that was founded in 1798 that had a wonderful history, but it was pretty forgettable in the sense that it didn't have that personality.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: There was no point of connection with it, but when I started blogging and when I started getting involved in social media, all of a sudden people began to care about the company at a deeper level because they cared about me or felt connected to me. So an engaging headshot is important, because if you realize you're either the spokesperson or you *are* the brand...

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Like now, I *am* the brand for my brand, you know? So an engaging headshot is essentially the packaging of that product. It's probably hard for you to think of yourself as the product.

Michele: Yeah, it is. I think of my message, but yet I was just thinking as you were talking that people don't connect with corporations; they connect with people.

Michael: They do.

Michele: It's the same way with products. People don't connect with products; they connect with people.

Michael: Well, they'll never get to the product unless they get through the person.

Michele: Exactly. That's where the connection, that's where the handshake, happens.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: That's where the relationship happens.

Michael: In your case, the headshot is like the packaging of a product, and if I like the headshot... By the way, this doesn't mean it needs to be a beautiful glamor headshot. It's rarely that.

Michele: Yeah. We're not talking about glamor shots here.

Michael: No. We're definitely not talking about that. We're talking about... When I say a great headshot, I mean a headshot that when the people who love you the most look at it, they go, "Oh, that's you."

Michele: Exactly.

Michael: Because it represents your personality.

Michele: Mm-hmm. Oh, that's so true, and it can take several shots to make that happen, so it's not going to just be... There have been times in the past when it was my mom with the camera taking my picture for me.

Michael: Sure. I've done those too. Yep.

Michele: Because that's where I was in my business, but now it's a necessary business expense for me to have a quality photographer taking a headshot that captures my personality and who I am, because if it isn't really me... I've had some headshots where my husband looked at them... He's actually the best person to do this for me.

Michael: Hmm.

Michele: He'll look at it and say, "That's not you. I don't like that." Then if I have a picture and he's like, "Oh yeah, that's you," I know I have the right thing.

Michael: Yeah. That's the way to do it. I do the same thing with Gail and my kids. The right kind of headshot is what photographers call the Duchenne smile, where it's not that fake, cheesy...I hate to say this...Olan Mills kind of photography.

Michele: Sorry, Olan Mills, but yes.

Michael: Yeah. Sorry.

Michele: Well, it's just not quite so posed.

Michael: Yeah. It's genuine, where you're laughing from the eyes. The corners of your lips are turned up. It's just that big, genuine smile. It feels warm. It feels authentic. It's inviting. It draws people in.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: That's what you're after in your photography, and good photographers will catch that. In fact, one of the things I like to say is the key to getting an engaging headshot is being engaged.

Michele: Hmm.

Michael: In other words, you have to be not just posing. Think of that word, by the way, *posing*...pretending.

Michele: Uh-huh.

Michael: No. Engaged. I'm going to be really engaged in this. I'm going to go to this photography session with my heart wide open and really participating and really trying to let my personality out.

Michele: Great advice. I love that. All right. The fifth element of a personal brand, this last one here... What is that?

Michael: That is *simple graphic components*. I really mean three things by this, and we really can't develop this at great length, but I'll give you a little bit of guidance on this. First of all, it's usually helpful to have a logo that represents your brand, something that's graphic, that depicts the personality of your brand, that can kind of be shorthand for your brand. We can think of examples. Some of them are so shorthand... Like Apple, which we've used repeatedly here. All they have is the apple. They don't even have to have the word anymore.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: That's sort of the value of a great brand. They no longer even need the word. There are some services where you can get this done. I've recommended 99designs before.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: You may find a designer locally who you really understand. We have a designer we use, Brandon, who totally gets our brand and who now designs all of our logos for all of our products. A logo is a key thing. Another thing...and we see this violated so much that it's unbelievable...is to have a defined color palette. Again, all of these is part of the fifth element, which is simple graphic components.

Have a color palette. Every color in the rainbow is not at your disposal as a brand. There need to be colors that represent your brand when you see them, so for me at this moment, it happens to be blues and greys. We're contemplating...in fact, by the time this podcast is out, we may have already done this...some other colors. But we're intentional.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: We try to understand the psychology of color. Colors mean something. There's a reason why Amazon uses an orange "Buy" button. I promise you, they spent millions of dollars testing green, red, blue...

Michele: Yeah. It's not an accident.

Michael: It's not an accident. To have a color palette that's five, six, or seven defined colors so everything you design relative to your brand employs that color palette creates consistency, which translates into trust, which translates into sales. Then a third little part, a subpart, of this element of simple graphic components is to be intentional about your fonts. I wish I could show this. Again, we can show it in the video. I hate to say this, but I'm going to out somebody here. This is the website of my breeder that I bought my dog from...

Michele: We love Charlie, and we're very thankful to the breeder for a fabulous dog.

Michael: He's awesome. But I think she uses every font known to man, and it just creates this cacophony of noise. I feel anxious just looking at the page.

Michele: Yeah. It's just too much for the eyes to take in.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: So you want to settle on a few fonts.

Michele: It almost seems like there's some indecisiveness. "I don't know what to choose, so I'm just going to do them all."

Michael: Yeah, or, "I'm just going to shout and hope something catches your eye."

Michele: Which sometimes happens with the color palette as well.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: I see people kind of go, "I don't know which colors to use. I think it would be so beautiful to have the rainbow. Let's just use them all."

Michael: Right, somebody who just uses everything. "I can't really decide." So to pick two or, at the most, three fonts that you use consistently throughout all of your branding is really important as well.

Michele: How many do you use? Do you use two or three?

Michael: I actually use three.

Michele: Okay. But there's probably one that's predominant, right?

Michael: Yes, and I have a lot of products, so each of those has its own brand script, its own brand and everything.

Michele: Got it.

Michael: But at www.michaelhyatt.com, right now we're using Georgia for our body text font, which is kind of a general serif font that makes readability really easy.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: Then we use Helvetica as the sans-serif font, like for headlines. Then for captions, we use... It may be Arial. But that's pretty much it. That's enough.

Michele: Pretty basic. That's enough.

Michael: I mean, two is enough, really.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: So you can use different weights of those fonts, but you have to keep it simple. Otherwise, people get disoriented.

Michele: As we wrap up here, as you work with different people, especially on Platform University... I should just add that at Platform University, you actually walk through this with some of the members at different times, which is so helpful.

Michael: We do.

Michele: For those who are contemplating being a member of Platform University, it might be beneficial for you to go ahead and take on that investment and get a part of that, because you can work through some of this there.

Michael: Yeah. It's very helpful to see concrete real-life examples of people who have done it wrong or at least have things missing and then to be able to address those directly...like Megan and I do in a video...and then take them to the next level.

Michele: So when you're doing that, is there one of these five that you see is the most common mistake?

Michael: Well, definitely. Almost everyone we help hasn't started with the audience. They have no clue who they're writing to.

Michele: So they're working on color palettes and logos and headshots.

Michael: They're getting ahead of themselves.

Michele: Yeah, that and they just don't even know who they're doing it for. You really can't do that other stuff until you identify your audience.

Michael: Exactly right.

Michele: This has been excellent.

Michael: Good! Good.

Michele: I've really enjoyed this today. In fact, as I've been sitting here...those who are listening don't know this...I've been taking ferocious notes.

Michael: I've watched that.

Michele: I have all kinds of to-do's for when I get back to my office. Thank you for giving us all of that fabulous information today on how to develop a personal brand. That market is busy out there, and we want you to be able to get your message out there. It matters to us. We want to see you succeed, so follow these five elements here. Start with that audience. Don't skip over it. It's so important. Then you can see how you can get a little bit more traction, get a little bit more attention out there in the market.

If you've enjoyed today's conversation, you can get all of the show notes as well as the full transcript. I know we gave you tons of information today. You may want to go back and read that transcript. You can get all of this at www.michaelhyatt.com. In addition, if you would prefer to watch us recording this episode, you can watch the entire video at www.michaelhyatt.com. Do you have any final thoughts today, Michael?

Michael: Yeah. Do the hard work of doing this. It's not easy. It's not sexy. It's easy to go on to other things, but if you don't do this, it'll kind of handicap you all throughout the development of your business and throughout the development of your brand, so do this foundational work. It's important.

Michele: Good stuff. Thanks for being with us today.

Until next time, remember, my friends: Your life is a gift. Do what matters.