

Are you there, Oprah?

Are you there Oprah? It's me, Eleanor. I could really use a sounding board, and I can't think of a better person to approach than you, the reigning queen of talk.

Writing to you has been on my priority list for months now! In case you are wondering, my priority list is a collection of my 20 top, strategic priorities and attendant sub-priorities that I keep on a bulletin board near my desk (for easy reference). Every time something comes up that seems like it might be important, I just add it to my priorities list. This way, I can be sure to be on top of EVERYTHING. As you know, maintaining an unrelenting focus on details, while simultaneously visioning the big picture is a priority skill for folks like us who communicate for a living!

Oprah, I'm working hard to live my best life, I really am. I want others to know I'm trying to live my best life too. So as far as I'm concerned, priority number one is to convey a powerful personal brand. With the help of an accredited brand manager, I've undergone a brand discovery process to help me uncover my most authentic self. Through this expensive and time-consuming exercise, I've unlocked my own personal brand! Here it is: Live Your Best, Most Articulate Life. (It's almost the same as yours, O! How cool is that?)

Thankfully, my personal brand translates well into a mission statement: *I live the best, most articulate life*. I recite this mission statement to myself each morning, while I stare into the mirror and concentrate on my inner power. It's going so well! I really, truly believe I live the best, most articulate life. I am creating my own reality, one inner sound bite at a time. In addition, I have paid a designer to develop some personal brand guidelines, away from which I do not deviate. These days, I wear only mauve and white pantsuits. This way, clients, stakeholders and other key audience members will be able to recognize me anywhere!

I'm also leveraging the power of my personal brand by turning it into a unique value proposition. Here it

is, O: *I help companies, individuals and publications be better, and more articulate*. I've incorporated this value proposition as an email signature, and I also use it at networking events when I introduce myself. Sure, sometimes people will look at me as I introduce myself in this way with an expression that says: *Who is this chick?* But I ignore them. I'm projecting such a cohesive and unrelenting brand that if they don't know what I stand for now, they soon will.

The problem is, O, the more I refine my personal brand, the more challenging it is to stay on message! I know you're not supposed to have more than two or three key messages and that, no matter what, you must stick to them. But really, how many times can I repeat, *I have the best life; I am articulate* when people ask me how the weather is? I fear I'm starting to sound unprofessional. How do *you* stay on message, O? Please tell me and I promise I'll tweet about this valuable insight with my entire network.

Phew, it feels good to get this stuff off my chest. I've sought advice from colleagues I respect, but no one has written me back, despite the fact I flagged my message as 'Urgent'. Gayle would never do that to you, I know. But in my colleagues' defence, they are all super, super, crazy busy with priorities. And I never return their emails either.

Speaking of priorities, I've only told you about my first priority – I have 19 others! They cover diverse topics, ranging from health and wellness to professional development, to actual work. But projecting my personal brand, staying true to my authentic self and

ensuring my written and oral conversations are rich in key messages takes up most of my day. By 5 p.m., I'm too exhausted to even consider priorities two to 20 and their associated action items. (Maybe I'll write to Dr. Oz next, and see if there's a way to simultaneously boost energy and cut calories. Thoughts???)

Anyway, thanks for listening, O. I feel so connected now! I don't know how I'd be successful without you. 🍎



Eleanor Beaton

Maybe I'll write to Dr. Oz next, and see if there's a way to simultaneously boost energy and cut calories.

Eleanor Beaton, is an award-winning journalist. Her column on communications, marketing and business culture appears in each issue of *Atlantic Business Magazine*. Feedback: dchafe@atlanticbusinessmagazine.com