



# Leadership Branding Activity

Hugh Blane

**Step 1.** Define your Default Brand. The starting point for building your leadership brand involves writing four words or phrases that you believe best describe your leadership. Don't overthink this; simply capture what you see is the essence of your leadership.

**Step 2.** Create a list of eight to ten people that you trust and respect. They can be colleagues, managers, coworkers, direct reports, former employees, and or friends. Your list should be a list of people whose opinion you value.

**Step 3.** Call and or ask in person your list and let them know you are involved in a leadership activity that requires candid feedback. As someone you respect their assistance in seeing your leadership from an outsiders perspective is essential.

Specifically, ask them to provide you with four words or phrases they believe best describe your leadership. It can be a one word descriptor such *innovative* or *inspiring*. It can also include phrases such as "*can do attitude*."

This step will capture thirty-two to forty words that represent what others see as your leadership brand. Review your words and compile a list of themes or patterns. Similar words or synonyms should be distilled into a one-word descriptor that best represents what you believe is the tone and or feel of the words.

**Step 4:** The ultimate objective of this step is to determine what the overarching essence is to your leadership, and to articulate your leadership in the fewest words possible. To do so, whittle your list down to a list of four or five words that best represent your current leadership. This is your Default Brand.

*Be Distinct*

*Or*

*Be Extinct*

Tom Peters



# *You have to WAKE UP in order to SHOW UP.*

Hugh Blane

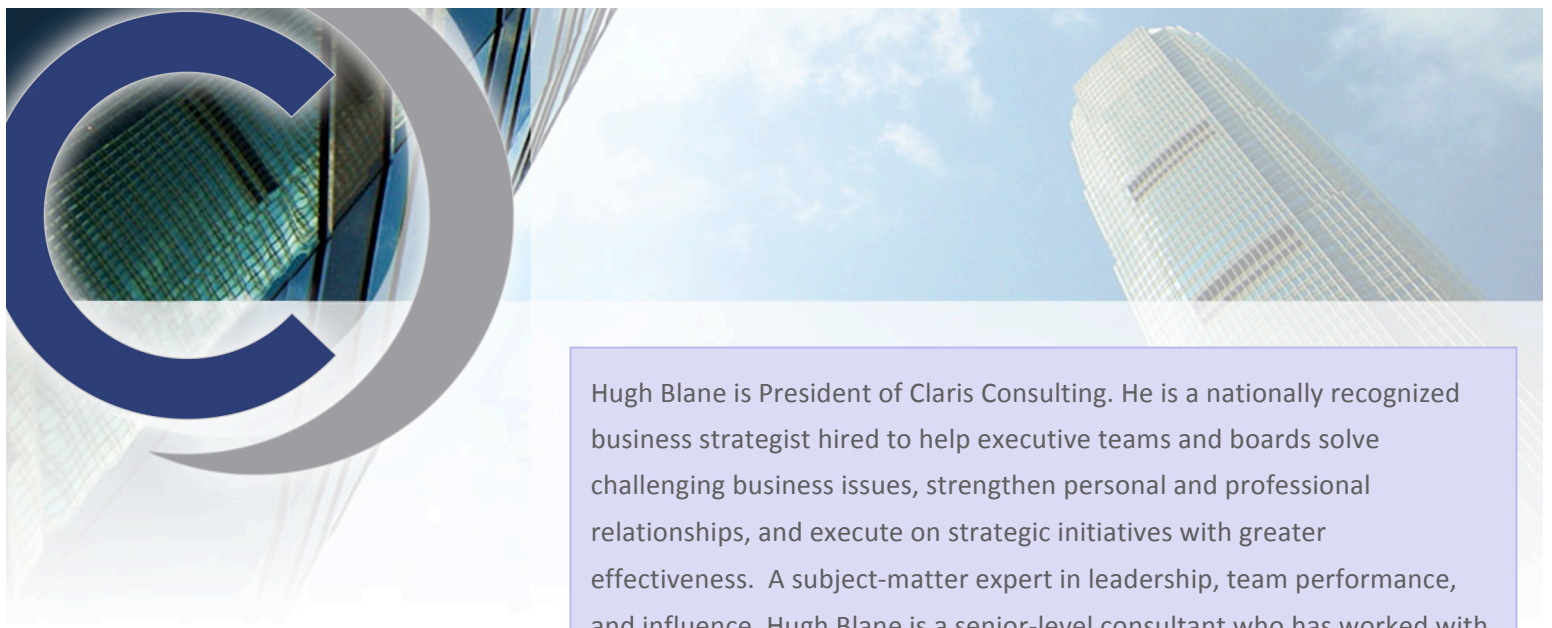
**Step 5.** Determine if there is a gap between the personal descriptors you generated from your perspective and the list generated by your observers. Ask yourself the following questions:

- a. Am I being seen in ways consistent with my goals and aspirations?
- b. Is my list of descriptors (both my own and from my observers) distinctive or simply the price of entry for being in my role?
- c. What is the upside and downside to my leadership for being seen this way?
- d. Am I excited about the words used to describe me, or am I neutral?

**Step 6.** Define your Desired Brand. Ask yourself Life's Three Most Important questions in order to get clear about what you want to be known for. This step is less about logic and what's probable; it is rooted in articulating your highest hopes and aspirations for you and your leadership.

**Step 7.** Define your Designed Brand. After determining your Desired Brand, ask how you can behaviorally live your Desired Brand. What behaviors will you exhibit in order to be seen as your Desired Brand? Again, ask yourself if the behaviors you've identified are distinctive or simply necessary for being in your role?

If you have any questions, or would like help working through the seven steps to a more compelling leadership brand, contact Hugh Blane at 206.829.9413, or email him at [Hugh@Clarisconsulting.net](mailto:Hugh@Clarisconsulting.net).



Hugh Blane is President of Claris Consulting. He is a nationally recognized business strategist hired to help executive teams and boards solve challenging business issues, strengthen personal and professional relationships, and execute on strategic initiatives with greater effectiveness. A subject-matter expert in leadership, team performance, and influence, Hugh Blane is a senior-level consultant who has worked with thousands of people in a wide variety of organizations including Swedish Hospital, Pepperdine University, Spacelabs Healthcare, Settle Metropolitan Credit Union, Microsoft, Starbucks, NCAA, KPMG and Costco.