

Small Enterprise India Information Desk



“God has made each of us a first class original. Do not die a second grade copy” said Anand Pillai, head of talent transformation at HCL Technologies in his session on personal branding at Tie Entrepreneurial Summit 2010.

“We live in the age of minor differences. The difference between company A and company B is minor,” said Mr Anand Pillai, Senior Vice President and Head of Talent Transformation at HCL Technologies as he started his power packed session on building a personal brand for yourself. “You have to create differentiation as a person, as a company.”

As an entrepreneur, it becomes even more important to establish a personal brand. Unlike an executive in a company, an entrepreneur has a wide variety of people to influence: his team, customers, prospective investors, and shareholders. Without a differentiating presence, an entrepreneur could find it hard to make an impact.

“Your identity is defined by what you are going to be remembered for, when you are long gone,” he said. It’s not about the situation you are in, it’s about the approach you have towards that situation that will stay in people’s minds. For instance, we remember Mahatma Gandhi for the approach he took to handle the British rule.

Your identity is not about how you look. “It’s more about your desire, your yearning to leave a stamp on earth,” said Mr Pillai. He also added that one’s identity is not about your achievements, but it’s about how you have impacted people’s lives. Mr Pillai spoke about creating a personal leadership brand, which he says is a simple statement of who you are. This means that you should be aware of your strengths and weaknesses, passion, drivers, etc.

The idea is to create a positive brand. For that, it is critical for you to have pride in yourself.

“People who are negative about themselves will not create a positive brand,” said Mr Pillai.

He also urged the audience to reflect on some questions. Which of my strengths are manifest when I lead? Which strengths influence and inspire others? Which strengths do I want to leverage more? Which strengths could I have and become better at?

Mr Pillai elaborated his views to a question - how does one establish his personal brand? “You can study your business to map your passion. This means uncovering the unmet needs and areas of dissatisfaction of your customers. Then you must connect the dots using your passion”.

“Then you become your own competitor and create a big entry barrier for others to follow. Identify the threats perceived by your rivals and build on your strengths. You have to learn to reinvent yourself”. Mr Pillai opined that one thing we tend to do is to move away from things we don't like. He suggested that we must move towards what we are good at, rather than running away from what we consider not good or right. “Set yourself a target you can be passionate about”.

“Do not network for the sake of doing so. Network with value adders, he said. Spend as much time as possible with people who can give you different perspectives on how to address gaps you have identified. Develop relationships with real value creators. Then identify what creates value for you. Focus continually on creating high value at low costs. If there are areas where you are able to create high value at high costs or efforts, raise the bar there; it will be a tough act for others to replicate. Reduce activities that are low value and low cost, and eliminate those that don't create value but still cost a lot”, concluded Mr Pillai.