

- You're listening to the HR Mixtape, your podcast with the perfect mix of practical advice, thought-provoking interviews and stories that just hit different so that work doesn't have to feel well, like work. Now your host Shari Simpson.

- Joining me today is Roy Abdo, CEO at Digital Revamp. Roy advises C-level executives on digital storytelling, online strategy integration, executive personal brand and paid media. Roy advised the Military Health System for the Department of Defense on communication strategies and is also a speaker for the US State Department. Roy also serves as a certified CliftonStrengths and high performing team coach. Thank you so much for spending some time with me, Roy.

- Thank you for having me, Shari. It's amazing to be here and thank you for selecting me.

- Oh yeah, personal branding is such an important piece of HR and it's something that in my own career I've tried to kind of figure out the secret sauce, but I thought we could start with you sharing like why should HR professionals really consider personal branding as like a key part of their career?

- There's one thing that digital and social media created in the world, which is more and more of a personality for each individual. And the way I think about it is people used to join companies but in today's world with digital, people join people. So as an HR professional we know that people are looking you up or looking your company or executive up on social media, on Google and all those places. And the data tells us nine out of 10 people, before joining a company, they look up the executives, they look up the team, they look up the culture, what it's looking like in that place before they join. So thinking about it from a perspective of you wanna attract the right talent to your company, you have to have the right presence and the right positioning. So this way people can join you.

- How do you, or what are some practical examples of how you start to build that personal brand? I mean there's so much out there with social influencers right now that you wanna be authentic. So where do you start?

- I think the step number one, which is gonna sound so like therapeutic or something is you have to know who you wanna be and who you are and who you aspire to be. You gotta start with yourself and what is your interest and where you aspire to go and how the world find it useful. For example, my personal skill is storytelling and content creation and strategy. I literally just switched different careers to end up the last 10 years focusing on this, 15 years now actually. So I think the first step number one is think what area you do so well that doesn't take you a lot of effort to do and doesn't take you so much time to do and you just do it naturally. So once you

do that part and you figure out who would be the audience for that, that's the second step, knowing your target audience, then you kind of look where're the target audience spending their time, what are they reading, who they're following, why they're following those people and in that target audience, what is their aspiration? Where are they're trying to go? Because this is what the kind of content you wanna create for those people because they wanna try to go get there. And the step number three is you figure out who you are, you wanna be, you figure out the content, then you figure out what type of content you need to put out and what platform. For example, you're trying to reach HR professionals that are on LinkedIn, you're trying to reach Millennials, there're a lot of them on certain Instagram account. Maybe TikTok is another place, maybe YouTube another place, maybe newsletter, you know? So to me, you have to understand your target audience consumptions. Then based on that, you can figure out what content to put out for them. Then becomes the idea of what type of content to put for them. And I always make it for you to become known for something, you have to simplify it in a way that you can explain it so a five-year-old can understand it because that's how the brain functions. We have a low attention span and if we're not thinking how the user receiving the information, we're gonna lose those people on the newsfeed. So the content you wanna put out is pretty much helping those individuals who wanna go where you are right now or where you're trying to go or making their life simpler with the content you're putting out. So think about five ways to get somewhere or here's what you know, here's what you don't know about ChatGPT, for example. Here's six ways an HR professional can help this. Here's why joining us would be a great benefit for your career. So from that lens kind of thinking where your audience trying to go and then develop content from your expertise from curating content, which is looking up different pieces of content, performing in different places and you start putting that content calendar for yourself. Then once you put the content calendar, you move to distribution and you start posting when people are online, you create those... There's different tools to help you create anything from Canva to ChatGPT to GIPHY. There's so many AI tools that could help with this but to me, the tools always existed. It's just a matter of consistency. Consistency is like create a personal brand. So make a commitment to make one piece of content a week. We're not talking a lot more than that. And that piece of content could be simply a written piece or doesn't have to be so much a graphic or anything like that. It could be repurposing something you read. And then the last piece of the puzzle is I mentioned knowing your audience. Ideally, you wanna make a list of those target audience and then once you post something, you wanna be engaging with their content and you wanna be part of the conversation existing out there in the space. Right now, there's a conversation happening around every single thing you can think about, anything from, you know, people who love red hats, people who love DNI, whatever subject, there's a conversation. If you type in a hashtag, there's someone talking about it. So if you wanna be known for something, know what that something

is and the hashtag trending and start being part of that conversation.

- There were so many nuggets from what you just said that I feel like there's a content list right there. You talked about only having to post once a week. I think that's really good for people to hear who could be super overwhelmed with, hey, I have to post all this stuff. You know, when you're engaging with the content, what's typically how many times you should be responding then in a week?

- I would say, I mean if you make it a point, I challenge everyone listening to this podcast, if you open your phone right now and you look the time spent on anything, you're gonna see you're spending about an hour, maybe 30 minutes to an hour on some social network. If you make it a point instead of consuming, producing, you're gonna go a lot further. So the minute you open your app, put a time limit on it. So this way you know you've already consumed so much. So you have to be actively producing and as simply as writing one comment, thank you or hello, this is a great post, I love this read, congratulations on this new award that you received. Engaging with at least three to five comments on a daily basis. Nothing too crazy, just simply that's a great post. I love the angle on this. Here's what I've had experience with. That's gonna get you a lot further.

- How have you coached people who after hearing this go, "Yeah, but why would anybody wanna listen to what I have to say?"

- I mean the thing is if you think about the human brain, we're designed to have the least amount of effort done to do something. So if your brain has figured out something that could help someone reduce the amount of effort to do something, that's the recipe. For example, why you'll be listening to this podcast? 'Cause you're trying to hack personal branding without having you to do the trials and errors. You listen to someone who did it for 10 minutes, it gets you somewhere. So that's what I always go back to the idea of know yourself and what you have solved so far. What are you're trying to solve? What are you reading? What your interest is? Because the things you're interested in reading and consuming could be useful for someone but you just don't wanna take the time and effort in step number one spending 10 years on something. So think about your past experience. You frequently ask questions, people are asking you what do you find commonsense to you is not commonsense to others. I tell people like commonsense is not common because different people have different commonsense on things. Like for me, it's commonsense, why would I not post it on two places or why not not turn this podcast into a video? But it's just different. We're wired differently.

- Yeah.

- So just always focus on what value you wanna bring into the world and how you are valuable for someone because otherwise you wouldn't be

getting paid, you wouldn't be where you are today, right? So you are useful for someone, you just haven't taken the time to document it.

- How do you balance the idea of creating a personal brand and representing the brand of your company? I've heard feedback from other HR professionals who they feel obligated only to post content from their company. Do you have some advice on that?

- I mean, to me, there's a thin line between brand and personal brand, especially in today's age because you can have a lot more freedom to experiment with your personal brand and try different things and have a personality versus the actual brand could stand for the product, the services, the look and feel and everything. So your personal brand is a way we can humanize the brand. So the way I explain it is you could be changing job and you could bringing human perspective to any brand or any job you had with what drives you as a person 'cause every one of us has a driver, has a drive to something. For example, my drive is every day to help people communicate better, become better communicators because I believe better communicators are better leaders. And I think it starts with storytelling and content because if you look at every single leader that we aspire to be like or we wanna be like them one day, they're really good storytellers and they move you emotionally from one place to another. So thinking about yourself from what do you wanna aspire the world and then use the brand or your personal brand to tell that story to bring that to life. That's a one recipe I always recommend.

- How do you learn that art of storytelling? I mean, I feel like especially in HR, we all have really great stories to tell.

- I mean, think from a perspective of any time you felt that little heart movement on something or you got little goosebumps or you're talking about something or someone had a light bulb when you said something, that's a story to be told and think, I would say the best stories are reflections on things versus imaginative stories because not everyone has this muscle of imagination that could come up with a scenario, but thinking of a moment when you're sharing this insight with someone. Hey, here's a post you could do, the frequently asked questions. Think about the last interviews you've done, what are the common questions people asked you during those two pieces of content? And then that's the story you're talking about. Here's six questions I'm always asked about. One, two, three, four, five, six. Here's what I noticed. People are not preparing for this and this guy came to our office and he was in shorts and you know, we're trying to interview for a serious position. Please don't do that. Here's the best way to do it. Kinda like, every day, there's stories around you. We're just not wired to capture some pieces of them and I think the more you become intentional about it, you start working the muscle of storytelling, then you become better, or subscribe to my newsletter on LinkedIn, right?

- Once you've curated that LinkedIn network, how do you start to leverage that personally for the work you wanna do?

- You curate a LinkedIn network from the content you're putting out. So the network knows you for the content. So I wouldn't focus on just adding random people. I'd focus on putting some content, then connecting with people so they see you and know you for that content. Then the next step would become is what value you wanna help for someone in because of that content you put out there? For example, I put a lot of content on storytelling, communication, best practices of LinkedIn, best practices of personal branding and thought leadership. And I started getting people asking me, "Hey, can you help me with that piece?" Because I started becoming known for something versus known for everything. The worst mistake you could make is just post anything you can come across. The best advice that I've received and I apply for our clients is start thinking of the destination and reverse engineer to what you need to do today.

- What are some other pitfalls that you've seen people make when they start to go down this road?

- I think the not knowing where to start and the analysis paralysis. And that's the best recipe I always recommend, there's something driving every day or there's a destination you're aiming to go for. You might not be in a career you wanna be today but you know where you wanna end up or you know the dream job that you have from simply, like I'll give you an example. There's this person that I know that he was trying to get a role in this big movie and he's living in a third world country but he wanted to get a role in Hollywood, and then couple of times, you know, people told him, "Hey, maybe you should create a profile on IMDB or something." And then one day, he created the profile and next thing you know, literally the next day, he got a role with a movie you might know called "Noah." And it's just about putting something out there. It's not difficult, it's just the wiring we have is we're always trying to maximize or we're not sure where to start or we're like waiting for the right. There's no right moment. The right moment is when you do something.

- So let's talk about features specifically, like tools on LinkedIn. Is there tools or features that HR professionals should be engaging in specifically for LinkedIn?

- I would say employment brand is key. So for example, a showcase space for your company or you know, the About Us page, make sure you're filling it out there, putting content on your page and then linking LinkedIn to your hiring process because people look at your company page on LinkedIn. There's now recently a scheduling tool on LinkedIn. You can actually schedule posts ahead. When you go to post, you can see like there's a little box at the corner, right? That kind

of gets used to schedule posts ahead of time. So you can sit down, create three pieces of content in one time and schedule them throughout, you know, a whole month.

- Wow, it's, such a great way to think about being more intentional and I love that you shared earlier the idea of looking at how much time you're spending on social media. My husband and I will play that game just to pull it up, be like who's spending more time than they should? You're already doing it. Like that's such good advice you're already doing, just block out part of that as content creation. What a great idea. What do you think about, you know, I've seen recently more and more LinkedIn collaboration articles. How have you seen those being utilized by professionals now?

- Those are a great tool because you're tapping into someone else's network. So it's always thinking about you have a voice and you have a following, someone has a voice, someone has a following. So you're leveraging both voices to become something. So I'm always a big fan of collaboration and those kind of stuff.

- So as we wrap up our conversation, Roy, what is your like top three tips as you think about getting started? So you already gave a little bit, like be consistent. Is there anything else you'd share with our audience?

- I would say again, like this podcast is a great place. Think of people and think of places. Think of content that someone has done it before or been doing it before so you reduce the amount of errors and you can maximize your effort. And I always make the distinction between there's a difference between being busy and getting things done. You might be busy and stuff but you're not getting things done if they're not intentional to head to a certain direction. So be intentional in your direction and reverse back to what you need to do today. And the last piece of advice is just don't stress it too hard. You can always delete.

- Oh, I love that. You can always delete. What great advice, Roy. Thank you so much for taking a few minutes of your day with me.

- Thank you so much and looking forward to see you all and connecting with you on LinkedIn.

- I hope you enjoyed today's episode. You can find show notes and links at [theHRmixtape.com](http://theHRmixtape.com). Come back often and please subscribe, rate and review.