



LinkedIn-Based Personal Branding Training To Improve Final Student Career Readiness

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Abstract

Worker recruitment patterns and career development are now greatly influenced by the development of digital technology. Therefore, it is necessary to develop abilities and skills in final year students as an effort to build a professional image starting from college until after they graduate. At this time, there are still many final year students who do not understand the concept of personal branding and have not utilized the LinkedIn digital platform website optimally as the main means of their career development. This community service activity aims to increase participants' understanding of the importance of personal branding and their ability to manage the LinkedIn website as a means of providing a professional image to support their careers in the future. The service method applied has 4 stages, namely: 1. Preparation stage, 2. Discussion stage, 3. Practice/mentoring stage and 4. Evaluation stage. This activity will be carried out in June 2026 with the target of service being final year students. The results of the service showed that at first, the final year students did not understand the theme of personal branding and the use of LinkedIn. After the service was carried out, participants experienced an increase in knowledge and understanding of the importance of personal branding in supporting their careers in the future. Not only that, but participants are also able to optimize LinkedIn profiles to support their professional image displayed on the LinkedIn website. This is evidenced by compiling profiles, abouts, and other identities filled in on the LinkedIn website. At the end of this activity, an evaluation of the activity was carried out. Evaluations were carried out with participants who participated in this series of activities. The results of the evaluation show that there is a change in the mindset and thinking pattern of participants who now consider personal branding on the LinkedIn website important, so that this will affect their future decisions to improve their professional image through relevant activities.

Keywords: Career Readiness, Final Degree Students, LinkedIn, Personal Branding, Professional Image



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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the recruitment and selection process in human resources (Dewi & Hermina, 2024). The rapid development of information technology has significantly changed the recruitment process. E-recruitment, facilitated by job applications, improves the effectiveness and efficiency of candidate search and selection (Pryimak, 2023; Setiawan & Prianthara, 2024). Digitalization in recruitment allows companies to leverage digital tools to recruit candidate workers globally (Gigauri et al., 2020). This shift is driven by technological advancements, the globalization of the workforce, and the advent of remote work, which allows companies to reach talent from different parts of the world (Skibska & Konovalova, 2024). Therefore, Fierce competition in the job market requires university



graduates to have not only career readiness in the academic field, but also strong personal branding skills (Galera et al., 2023; Pfettser, 2021). These elements are essential for building a professional identity that increases competitiveness in the workforce (Nadia & Maksum, 2025).

Personal branding is essential for students as they transition from higher education to the professional market (Fitriandy et al., 2025; Girard et al., 2020; Rahma et al., 2024). Personal branding is indeed an individual's effort to cultivate a professional image and reputation that showcases their competencies, values, and character. It serves as a tool for professionals to differentiate themselves from competitors and achieve their career goals (Zafar et al., 2022). According to Waller (2020), Personal branding involves and promotes a person's identity, which includes unique personalities, associations, and traits to create the ideal self. It is the public-view relationship of a person's identity, the image shown, and the value proposition of a person.

Personal branding involves applying various strategies and techniques to grow an individual's professional image and reputation. It enables employers, professionals, and employees to identify and communicate their core skills and competencies effectively (Alonso-Gonzalez et al., 2019). Therefore, personal branding is essential for students to strengthen their professional identity, improve employability, and differentiate themselves in a competitive job market. By effectively managing their personal brands, students can increase their chances of getting a job and advancing their careers (Morales-López et al., 2025).

Over time, personal branding has evolved significantly due to advances in information technology, allowing individuals to build their professional identity through digital platforms (Hutauruk et al., 2024). One of the digital platforms that is widely used in career development is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a widely used platform for career development, allowing users to create professional profiles digitally, expand their network, connect with others, join groups, and follow various organizations (Kashian, 2026; Katole, 2024; Wheeler et al., 2022).

Job seekers can create attractive profiles, follow interesting businesses, and explore job openings. For recruiters, LinkedIn serves as an essential tool for advertising job openings, showcasing company culture, and leveraging features like LinkedIn Recruiter to effectively identify and engage with potential candidates (Datta et al., 2024; Türkoğlu, 2025). Final year students who are also from Generation Z show a high level of adaptability to digital technology and social media (Ibrahim & Nur, 2025). Generation Z, born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, exhibits a strong digital orientation and adaptability to technology and social media. Their characteristics include multitasking abilities, high creativity, and a preference for engaging learning experiences (Wajdi et al., 2024).



Despite LinkedIn's potential for career development, many college students lack the platform. College students often prioritize communication and entertainment over professional networking (Billman et al., 2025; Hidayatullah et al., 2025). In addition, some students may not have a sufficient understanding of the advantages of personal branding (Kariza, 2025). This can hinder their career readiness and transition into the workforce. This gap underscores the need for educational initiatives to raise awareness of the role of personal branding in career development (Nadia & Maksum, 2025)

Based on initial identification, there are several final year students who live in the city of Banda Aceh who do not know personal branding and have not made deep use of the LinkedIn website as a forum for personal branding for students. Considering that the city of Banda Aceh is the capital of Aceh Province, which has a high level of job vacancies and qualified digital infrastructure, these students should take advantage of this condition. This condition shows that it is necessary to empower the public in the awareness of the importance of personal branding and the urgency of using the LinkedIn website as an effort to prepare for changes in the labor market through digital means. Final year students are selected because they are in transition to the world of work. Before entering the world of work, it is appropriate for final year students to improve their skills and abilities as an effort to build personal branding. Therefore, empowerment needs to be carried out so that people can improve their abilities and skills in maintaining their lives (Bali et al., 2025; Fuadi et al., 2025). This community service activity is carried out in the form of education for final year students. Thus, this service activity aims to increase the understanding of final year students about personal branding and optimize the use of LinkedIn as a career development medium.

2. METHOD

This community service activity will be carried out in June 2026 using the method of discussion, education, and direct assistance to participants who are final year students. Participating in this activity were final year students, with a total of 15 people, and the activity was carried out in the city of Banda Aceh. Final year students are the object of this service on the grounds that they are in the transition stage to the world of work. The use of this method aims to introduce the understanding of personal branding to final year students and provide training to use the LinkedIn website as a means for final year students to improve personal branding. The implementation of this activity is carried out through several mechanisms as follows:

1. Preparation stage

At this stage, the service team conducts an initial identification related to the understanding of the participants who will take part in this service activity. Students who are targeted for service are brands that do not have an understanding of personal branding and do not have a LinkedIn website. In addition, the elaboration of the



importance of forming personal branding was packaged by the service team in the form of a presentation through a PowerPoint. The training material includes an overview of the definition of personal branding, the importance of building an image of professionalism for job seekers, and social media as a forum to highlight the image of professionalism and the current competitive world of work. In addition, discussions related to the use of the LinkedIn website include: an overview of the LinkedIn website, the importance of using the LinkedIn website to build an image of professionalism, creating a website account, and compiling an attractive profile. In addition to material preparation, facilities are also needed in this preparation stage to support later activities. The facilities prepared are classrooms as a place to implement, an infocus, and laptops as the main means of presenting service modules later.

2. Discussion stage

After the delivery of the initial material was carried out, the activity continued with intense discussions and two-way communication. This is important because the service team wants to ensure that the participants really understand what is conveyed by the service team. In addition, two-way communication is also a way to make the implementation of this activity fun (not rigid), so that the message that the service team wants to convey can be understood by participants, especially in presenting related to personal branding and the use of the LinkedIn website for final year students.

3. Practice/mentoring stage

At this stage, final year students are directed to practice the use of the LinkedIn website together. Starting from registering an account, writing information that matches the experience of the participants on LinkedIn profiles. In addition, participants were instructed to fill in the " About " section on the LinkedIn website systematically and interestingly. So that later it will be the initial capital in building a professional image for them.

4. Evaluation Stage

The Evaluation Stage is carried out so that the service team knows the level of ability and understanding of the participants after participating in this variety of service activities. Evaluation is carried out through discussion, questions, and answers after the delivery of the material, both material related to personal ranking and related to the use of the LinkedIn website. The success in the implementation of this program can be seen in the ability of final year students to understand what is conveyed by the service team and be able to practice it at the service location.



3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The main purpose of community service activities is to increase Generation Z's awareness regarding the urgency of personal branding as capital in preparation for looking for a job in the future. In the initial stages of training, the service team provided basic materials related to the formation of personal branding as an effort to develop professional identity. This includes showing the talents, values, and self-potential possessed by the service participants. Building a portfolio of yourself as a professional person is a mandatory thing that must be owned by final year students as the initial capital to get the job they dream of.

As a result of observations before the implementation of the service program, the majority of students do not understand or do not understand the concept of personal branding. Personal branding, as understood by final year students, involves displaying several achievements on social media such as X and Instagram. Some students also believe that personal branding is needed for workers who have matured in their work, such as public figures, party leaders, people in business, and people who have entered the world of work. No one understands that personal branding builds a positive image related to a person's abilities, skills, personality, and concentration as a whole.

Material related to personal branding is explained lightly through discussion, questions, and answer methods. A case example in applying personal branding is shown to final year students so that they understand the context with real examples that are seen. The community service team shows that personal branding not only introduces us to others, but also shows our measurable abilities, skills, and personalities that are useful for others and, of course, beneficial for companies or institutions that will recruit participants as workers later. Thus, the representation of the branding process is that we have a professional identity in order to support future careers in the form of a track record of skills, not just imagery.

The discussion that emphasized the involvement of the service team as a facilitator went quite well. Many final year students are curious about the meaning of personal branding. This shows that the participants showed great interest in following this material during the activity. Some participants said that work experience, achievements that have been achieved, academic and organizational activities, and individual skills can be the main factors that determine the good and bad of personal branding. They believe that different skills, among others, are the initial capital to focus on their existing skills, rather than having to follow the wishes of their parents and the invitation of friends to have a career together in a field they are not good at.

After explaining the meaning of personal branding, the activity continued to teach about the importance of building a professional image in today's digital era. The digital era is a different era compared to 20-30 years ago. Various aspects of life are drastically



changed by the advancement of information technology that is developing today. One of them is related to how we interact with each other in terms of recruiting employees. If in the past it was dominant to recruit employees through mass media platforms, now this has changed to recruiting employees through digital media. Companies and recruiters today assess potential employees based on their accessible reputations through their digital footprints. Thus, it is an obligation to form a professional image so that the chances of getting a job for final year students are greater.

Participants were informed in detail that media, including social media, is the right way to develop a reputation for professionalism. Of course, it must be used correctly according to applicable regulations. One of the things that others use to measure us is when we share information or post something in various online media. Therefore, it is important to be wise and ethical in using social media. This understanding is important to inform Generation Z because final year students are Generation Z who interact a lot with a variety of online media.

Thus, participants have realized that the professional image is not formed instantly, but is organized through a continuous process and consistency. For example, their involvement in student organizations or other informal organizations, participating in various trainings and certifications, having various academic achievements, and the ability to communicate well are achievements that are not achieved in a short time. Therefore, final year students must move faster to achieve these various things in order to develop themselves as the initial capital for their personal branding.

The next material is to give an idea that the current job competition is very competitive. Not only fresh graduates are looking for jobs, but currently all age ranges are also looking for jobs that are decent according to them. The competitive world of work today must be circumvented with a strong and distinctive personal branding strategy. Of course, this personal branding must be achieved with the latest skills and adaptability to the world of work later.

This material also supports the participants to understand that personal branding to increase work readiness is a development of the image of final year students. Greater opportunities in obtaining a job are easily achieved by people who have a strong professional identity in the work environment, compared to those who do not have these characteristics. Thus, self-confidence will be formed later during the job selection process with various companies or various parties. The opinions of the participants regarding the importance of personal branding before the discussion were much different after this service was carried out. At first, personal branding was only a way of promoting themselves; now they clearly understand that personal branding is a strategic step that must be implemented from the beginning to get a qualified image of



professionalism. The importance of this understanding is that final year students are able to prepare themselves to face the rigors of the world of work after graduating from the world of education. Therefore, this discussion is very relevant to support increasing the readiness of the world of work for Gen Z students in the current digital era.

3.1 Optimizing the LinkedIn Profile of Service Participants

The follow-up material from personal branding is the use of the LinkedIn website as an arena for the publication of personal branding for final year students. This is a major focus in terms of improving their ability for career development in the digital world. As we know, this LinkedIn website is a big forum for all job seekers and those who are improving their careers to build a network with each other, both between prospective workers and for the leaders of companies or institutions. The existence of LinkedIn, which has complete and professional features, is an element that greatly supports students entering the world of work. Therefore, the introduction and deepening of final year students on the LinkedIn website is urgently needed.

The results of initial observations show that most of the final year students are already familiar with LinkedIn. However, related to the use of this platform, it is still very rarely used by service participants. Some of the things that cause the participants to be unfamiliar with this website are: a. Have not felt the need to use this website, b. I have not thought of using this website because it is still in the lecture stage. I find it difficult to use this website because I do not understand how to use it. In fact, if used correctly, this platform becomes one of the most useful platforms in finding a job.

In the initial stage, participants are educated in the process of creating a LinkedIn account. The service team explained that this platform can form a professional network with various people in other parts of the continent, including developing relationships, looking for information related to available job vacancies, participating in the actual development of the industrial and digital world, and hosting a promotional event for final year students to introduce their personal branding to a wide audience. Participants who do not have an account can register on their respective cellphones or laptops. During the process, the service team provides appropriate and correct instructions so that the desired appearance is in accordance with the career goals and skills of the participants. **Headline:** The participant's profile on the LinkedIn website is compiled after the account registration process is completed. Participants were given an understanding of the importance of filling out LinkedIn profiles carefully. This is so that recruiters or company leaders can see the identities and skills embedded in the profiles of final year students. Therefore, the identity that must be displayed on his profile is in the form of: scientific field, interests, skills, or abilities he has. In entering this information, the following steps must be considered: a. fill in the information honestly, b. The information is filled with specificity and informative, c. giving an exclusive



impression to the company's leaders. Thus, it is important to show an optimistic and quality profile on the LinkedIn website.

In the next stage, filling in the identity in the about section is another crucial step. This is the place to introduce yourself completely. In this service activity, final year students are informed of things that need to be written in this menu, such as: the educational background of the participants, the career development that the participants are interested in now and in the future, the competencies possessed by the current participants, the goals of the participants in the future, and the talents possessed by the participants. Difficulties are described in the early stages of participants writing the description systematically. Therefore, the service team provided examples of the appropriate wording and sentence formulation to help the participants directly.

Through this training, participants are able to create personal descriptions in a structured and systematic way that shows their respective identities professionally. Not only that, but they also took the initiative to include information on the track record of the organizations they followed, their interests, and their skills. So that their profiles become more informative, which supports them in getting a job later. The use of formal language is also informed to participants so that the profiles compiled look professional and elegant to other users.

One of the important points filled in the about profile is the experience of participating in the organization. This experience is important because it shows that final year students have leadership character, are able to blend in with others, establish good communication with others, and are able to work together as a team. Therefore, the service team reminded the participants to compile a profile by including organizational activities, various committees that have been undertaken, volunteer activities involving the team, and internships that they have undergone during lectures.

In addition to organizational experience, the appeal for the participants was carried out by the service team. The appeal is in the form of guidance to improve skills that suit their fields and interests. The goal is for their profile to be improved and to give an idea that these final year students have excellent abilities. Several abilities can be written, such as the ability to analyze SPSS data, the ability to operate Corel Draw, the ability to operate software, and others. To ensure that the profiles prepared are the skills that the participant actually has, the service team ensures that it returns to the participant.

Participants were also taught about the importance of including the data of certifications and training they have undergone as part of their professional track record. The service team suggested that certificates of seminars, training, online courses, and other supporting activities be included in his LinkedIn profile. The importance of

entering this data fosters the interest of participants to take part in all kinds of training and seminars that are in accordance with their science. Of course, this is beneficial for their CV on LinkedIn.

Participants showed great enthusiasm for updating their identities on their profiles during the event. This can be proven from interesting discussions, intense questions and answers, and participants' understanding that various organizational experiences, achievements, and training certificates they have have important value in building their professional profile. Their LinkedIn profile is currently filled and undergoing major changes to support them in their future job search. The profile, which previously only contained basic data, has now been filled in with specific, systematic information with various things added.

The change in the mindset of the participants who initially only saw LinkedIn as limited to social media, like other social media, has now undergone significant changes. Currently, they see that the LinkedIn website is not an ordinary social media, but has advantages as a platform to build reputation and support future careers. That way, they are currently preparing themselves to develop their skills and abilities so that later they will become the main capital in filling out their CVs on LinkedIn. Therefore, the use of the LinkedIn website seeks to support the career readiness of final year students in the midst of the increasingly competitive and strict dynamics of the world of work. The implementation of this activity has no significant obstacles. This is because the participants who participated in this activity already understood the early stages of the use of digital media. Implementing personal branding requires extensive discussion and more time to explain something new.



Figure 1. Introduction to personal branding



Figure 2. Introduction to the LinkedIn website



4. CONCLUSION

The service activity with the theme of LinkedIn-based personal branding training to improve the career readiness of final year students went very well. The introduction of the importance of personal branding to final year students aims to make them understand the meaning and importance of personal branding when they go into the world of work. Before the activity was carried out, the final year students did not have concerns about building personal branding for various reasons, namely: they felt that it was not important to build personal branding because they were still undergoing lectures and did not really understand the positive impact of forming personal branding. After being intervened by the service team, the participants understood the importance of personal branding, which is the main factor in getting a job later.

One of the websites that can support and display personal branding is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a social networking website whose goal is to open a network of the world of work. The majority of participants did not understand the urgency of using LinkedIn. However, when they have been taught the purpose and benefits of this website, they understand and want to immediately register their account on this website. The service team directs them from creating an account to providing a good and systematic profile feeding. At the end of each discussion, the service team evaluates the participants regarding their understanding and ability to manage the LinkedIn website. The results are very good, as they are currently very knowledgeable about using this website. Synergy is needed between the relevant government and academia to bridge the use of the LinkedIn application in final year students. Therefore, it can be concluded that this service activity ran with satisfactory results.

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