



HOW *to* FAME

STAND OUT/GET AHEAD/THAT SIMPLE

Richard Laermer

We are all KNOWN.

And the way we're perceived by those who know us—even those who encounter us briefly—affects our lives in tangible ways. Sadly, it doesn't matter how fantastic you are if others' perception of you is ... off. For this reason, understanding How to Fame—how to use the tools of this speedy millennium to advance your objectives—is no longer a “nice to have.” It's a must-have, and whether your goal is to shape or promote your personal brand, get a job or a promotion, be smarter, or find a mate. Today, fame matters.

The point here is not to be famous. Being famous is a job best left to those who care about little else. This is about **being an authority** and **using your fame to achieve greatness**. It's about getting what you want and what you deserve. And getting it right now.

Sadly, it doesn't matter how fantastic you are if others' perception of you is ... off.

The American Dream Is Dead. Long Live The American Dream!

Kill my boss? Do I dare live out the American dream? —Homer Simpson

Hard work is expected in America 2010—the recession has taught us we aren't simply entitled to the multi-bedroom house with a picket fence or the swanky apartment downtown. Not anymore. True success in 2010 will belong to those who not only work hard, but to those who *stand out*. Those who create their own fame.

Yet Fame is no longer defined as a Paris Hilton-style pseudo-celebrity. It's deeper than that. Fame is the way folks view you minute-to-minute. *Faming* is creating and maintaining a consistent image that reinforces your credibility and professionalism, which then builds confidence in others about your ability to get the job done.

Fame is getting known for the *right* reasons. Fame is being the go-to person. Fame is being consistent at all times, at any price. Fame is pragmatic renown. Fame can be thwarted by nothing—not the economy, not your competition—not a thing.

The promise of the American Dream inspired millions to believe that through an honest day's work alone, we would all find success. At best, that's a romantic notion and although it worked for many, particularly those who never stopped toying with new ideas, relying solely on such a construct today will no longer suffice.

Standing out (and up) with good-hearted yet aggressive techniques is the new Fame. If you aren't standing out, you'll be forgotten. If you're trying "to fame" too late you'll be left behind.

The time to fame—you guessed it—is now!

Truth: Perception Is Reality

We are all instantaneously judged based on how people perceive us when they encounter our persona for the very first time. Often, we haven't even opened our mouths before an opinion is formed.

What do you think of your mail carrier, for instance? You probably don't see him much, nor have you spoken to him except for the usual hi/bye noise, but you have an opinion of him that was formed in seconds, at first glance. It's an intrinsic human frailty: We judge others immediately.

Standing out (and up) with good-hearted yet aggressive techniques is the new Fame.

Unfortunately, many completely miss this stage of reality and muddle through life without realizing that negative, or worse, indifferent views on how we conduct ourselves hold us back from faming. It isn't that we don't care; we don't know or realize how important our external presentation is every minute of every day.

Look around the room you're in now. Can you see that some people are seemingly oblivious to the fact someone is watching them? And yet others appear hyper-aware?

Someone is *always* watching.

To fame, you have to use this to your advantage. When someone is seeing you in person or online, absorbing you visually, you have tons of opportunities to impress and garner the fame that will help move you forward!

Even after being clued in to the snap-judgment reality of a first impression, most of us are too stubborn to do anything to change that image. We think we shouldn't have to because "we are who we are."

News flash: "Who we are" is pretty amorphous. To fame, we need to make the rest of the world see us as the public personality we already know ourselves to be. We can't allow others to create the story for us.

Consequences of stubbornness are striking. We've all seen misplaced attempts in faming and can easily recognize them. Some examples:

- The quiet guy in his cube, who thinks everyone sees him as the silent, brilliant type and respects him for his intellect and eloquence, is really regarded as a weird hermit who uses big words gratuitously.
- The office bully, who pushes people around and takes credit for others' great ideas ... poor guy thinks he's respected because he's decisive.
- The salesman, who touts his lack of awareness of Twitter as his cool factor, but whose potential customers actually see him as a fossil in a bad suit.

For most, the public personality doesn't come near to our idea of how others perceive us. And until it does, we won't get enough fame for our efforts. We all have to take subtle steps to implicitly tell people what to think of us—what to *know*. It's called *messaging* and it isn't just for products anymore.

Our Goal: Change One or More Tenets of How the World Sees Us

First, the really good news: It's not your fault.

Culpability for lack of fame does not completely fall on the shoulders of a fame-devoid person. Other people enable us during our misguided attempts to fame. We hang out with our friends, who are just like us. We don't get, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story."

Our friends "get" us, probably even to the point that they may have figured out our public personality is different from the guy we are. They don't call us on it because friends don't do that—plus there's a good chance our closest friends share many of our same traits.

But faming isn't about making friends. It's about influencing the rest of the world, the nonfriends whom we need in order to get to where we wish to go.

To maximize our experience we have to take a few steps out of Plato's cave. You don't ditch your friends and forego your roots like a character in a sporting movie. But you need to be aware that a social group is not a representative sample of the people who make snap judgments about you every day.

What Do You Want?

Fame is fantastic on its own (Maslow says so), but it's also a tool that will help you obtain and achieve literally *anything*.

You want to make more money? Want that promotion? More responsibility? Choose to fame.

Set yourself apart. Show everyone that you are the go-to person at all times.

Here are the keys:

- Are you reliable? Do you do things when you say you will do them? (And I mean every time.)
“On time” means “a little early.”
- Are your communications smart and well thought-out? You need to show polish, poise and intelligence.
- Do you know your stuff? In a world where smoke and mirrors are quickly losing their esteem, authenticity is highly valued. A little research goes a long way.
- Are people amazed that you *aren't* the boss?
- Do you take on a task for no reason other than that you know it will help someone (the fame definition of “proactive”)?

Science Proves the New Fame Is Necessary

Gallup's latest Lifestyle Poll showed that Americans are less satisfied now with their lives than at any time since '92! While historically people are less satisfied during tough economies, this poll still produced one shocking stat: Only 47% of Americans are very satisfied with what's going on. That's the first time this number has been under 50% since Gallup started measuring this data in 1979.

That word *very* pops out. If only 47% of us are *very* satisfied, that has to say 53% of us are *not very*. And if we aren't, then what the hell are we doing?

You can get to where you need to go without making wholesale changes. You really just need to focus on making tiny adjustments in the way you're seen. That's it. You have to be sure that everyone you come in contact with meets the Model You.

Faming isn't about making friends.
It's about influencing the rest of the world ...

Meet Frank

Frank is 42, and has been married to his lovely wife for 17 years. They have two daughters, ages 15 and 9. The family lives in a comfortable three-bedroom home in suburban, not-so-affluent New Jersey.

Frank is in the textile game. Specifically, he is in middle management at one of the largest textile manufacturers in the U.S. Coworkers think of him as a hard worker, and a generally nice, dependable guy.

In this case, nice is a bad word.

Frank is happy, he *guesses*, but can't understand why his younger, less experienced peers routinely get promoted while he watches. Frank *knows* he would be best for all available jobs up the ladder and thinks the situation is hopeless because the powers-that-be see him as only "Frank: Lifetime Middle Manager."

Frank asked us to help.

First impressions are largely based on how we appear. Duh. The first step in faming Frank was to give the guy an upgrade. We realigned Frank's outward appearance, in all its forms, with what Frank's appearance should have always been:

→ **Office** | We bought Frank a filing cabinet to hold all of the papers that were stacked on his desk. Our team got him some snazzy (read: fun to gaze) pictures. And, we got Frank a low maintenance plant and a watering can. Now someone walking into his office for the first time thinks, gee whiz, this guy has it together!

→ **Clothing** | Frank's company-logoed golf shirts, provided by the Marketing Department, were his favored attire. Great for a tradeshow, but not for every day at the office. Continuing to wear them and expecting to be taken seriously were mutually exclusive.

This was an easy fix that didn't cost much. We took Frank to Macy's and upgraded his wardrobe to long-sleeved shirts in complimentary cuts and colors. Remember: Fit matters.

We also taught Frank rules of the buttons (three-piece: sometimes, always, never), and bought him ties to help him stand out. Solid colors. Big, bright, solid colors. *You are in charge, Frank! Look like you are!*

Now that Frank's appearance had fared, we set off to tweak his communication style and skills to match:

→ **Email** | Frank's office, like most, uses email for inter- and intra-office communications.

Unfortunately, the majority of email is rubbish. When we get substantive, helpful emails, we are pleasantly surprised.

The amount of time between sending an email and receiving a response is an indicator of a person's fame quotient. Unfortunately, the response times to Frank's emails were long, if at all. An easy fix.

Next, it was time for substance. We told Frank the easiest way to have emails taken seriously is to make them meaningful and professional. We pushed him to commit to two important rules: No more three-word emails, and no more spelling errors.

With these simple changes, when coworkers communicate with Frank today, they see him as *authoritative*. They know they can count on his correspondence to be timely, professional and informative. After all, Frank always was an *authority*; we just showed him how to express it.

→ **What next, Frank?** | This type of fame, business fame, is pragmatic renown, where pragmatism is an air of being an authority. In this case, *Frank's a manager*. The point was to make his world (his business colleagues and adversaries) see Frank as the indispensable authority on everything related to the business he already excelled in. Now, his coworkers, direct reports and managers all see and *know* he is the go-to Frank on everything in his purview.

Today, nothing is holding Frank back—not his (now-glorious) appearance, nor his formerly-lax communication habits—there is no reason he can't get what he wants from his job. He has fame. And it'll get him to where he wishes to go.

You want to make more money?
Want that promotion? More responsibility?
Choose to fame.

You say you want to be an Internet star?

With the emergence of the Web as a ubiquitous medium where anyone with a laptop, a Starbucks card and a Blogspot account can be a celeb, millions have tried to harness this power—and many have failed madly. The ‘Net got littered with boring, void-of-substance, self-crazed and lame blogs/podcasts/e-zines/vlogoids (and whatever else you want to call this mess). Just because you have a conduit doesn’t mean you should use it.

Luckily, there are some excellent blogs penned by people who were fameless before embarking on their journeys to Internet stardom. But who, through their sites and writing, famed themselves beyond their own expectations. They are perfect examples of how applying the basics of what I’m talking about will earn some serious no-shit notoriety.

Dr. Duncan Black, Ph.D, maintains a political blog, Eschaton, which records two million monthly hits. Posts are short, snarky and frequent. Rarely do they exceed a few paragraphs and many consist only of embedded YouTube movies or sarcastic comments about other articles written by online punsters. Every now and then Black takes on a more serious, longer post, which is usually about economics since he was once a professor of said subject. The amazing part? Each of these more lengthy pieces receives more than 500 comments!

For the first two years of the blog, Black wrote anonymously as “Atrios.” *The blog got hugely famous while nobody knew who was behind it!* He started insanely small, with no overhead. (It’s still hosted by Blogspot, the free service provided by and supported by* Google. It was only in 2008 that he registered his own domain to point to the site, which is still at atrios.blogspot.com.)

** Important for you who are looking for engine rankings; if something is supported by Google then it will be noted further up food chain than, say, some awful mention in the New York Times.*

Eschaton has now become so lucrative that Black doesn't even really *have* a day job anymore, lucky bastard. He is still a Fellow for a media watchdog group, but mostly hangs out in his Philadelphia home, scans the Web and writes a couple times a day. He's a normal guy who people read and respect—he's just famed.

Neal Pollack has styled his blog around the way he raises his northern California kid to be "The Continuing Adventures of an American Family in a Hipster Parenting Paradise." His posts are normally just anecdotes about goings-on in his household.

Note on his site the rubber ducky with the nose (beak) ring.

There's nothing particularly unique about the content. After all, most people raise children at some point. What makes Pollack compelling is his clearly supreme talent combined with his awareness of his hipster status, so as to poke fun at himself constantly—readers can't wait to see what he says about the ever-evolving doofus!

His posts about the mundane, like his son's 7th birthday party, are laugh-out-loud funny or no other reason than that he has a very approachable sense of who he is—and he never lets his tone be anything but that. His posts are less frequent than most, they occur every other day with a break now and again. But, that's also in line with who he is and who is reading him. And it works.

Who vs. What: What Wins

The common facet shared by these successful famers is that, at all times, they reliably provide what their followers want to see, read and comment on—these bloggers are viewed as authorities. They were not well known before they started, but their blogs helped them achieve an impressive, albeit unexpected, online notoriety. All because they're authorities on their subjects and they embody that authority in their personas. That's how these creators reached out and took the fame. *Because being an authority attracts a following.*

The successes of these bloggers are a blueprint for helping you get to fame. It isn't *who* you are; it's *what you provide*. You can't know everything but you sure as heck can be a resolute authority on what people expect you to be authoritative about.

The common facet shared by these successful famers is that, at all times, they reliably provide what their followers want to see, read and comment on ...

Want A Better Job?

Hiring managers see dozens upon dozens of resumes and cover letters that look exactly the same. The substance of your resume, therefore, means less than you think it does. Before the powers-that-be even consider your qualifications, they are going to notice:

- Spelled a word wrong? Welcome to the circular file.
- Didn't list an email address? Trashy-trash.
- Ink smudged? We knew you when ...
- Emailed your resume as a strange file type? Deleted.
- Used one or more clichés? Peace out.

It's a minefield. You have to jump through all kinds of hoops just to get recognized as a possible contender. You must, therefore, fame your resume.

First, think about all the little things needed to get through the first filter, and then spice it up. Follow simple rules, and give the reader something to *know* instead of something to *ponder*. It's your job to stand out.

The structure of our ultra-wired society allows *anyone* to be the go-to person. At this point it's a decision to stand out, or get wiped out.

If You Do Not Choose To Fame Then Someone Else Will

What is it you want? What is it that you *deserve*?

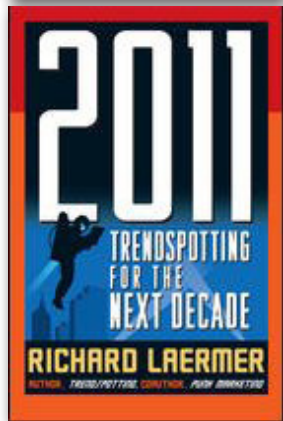
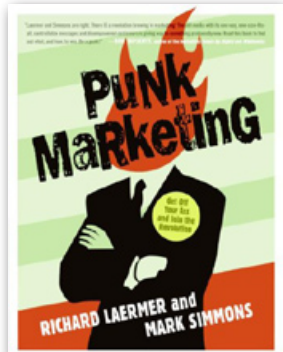
- The new job? The raise?
- The significant other? The happy, loving family?
- The degree?
- The respect?

Faming is getting what you want *and* deserve.

I cannot stress this enough: Time is of the essence. You must choose to fame before your peers do. Today, *standing out* means *standing up* and beating competitors to the punch. The last of us to figure this out will be standing in the cold.

Choose to fame. Today. This minute. 📌

Travel on over to howtofame.com/10Tips and join the private list. Get in on the activity now and get our 10 Tips to Faming that you need before the new decade gets going. It's a fantastic list. I know... I wrote it.



BUY THE BOOKS

Get more details or buy a copy of Richard Laermer's [Punk Marketing](#) and [2011:Trendspotting for the Next Decade](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Laermer, founder & CEO of [RLM Public Relations](#), is a frequent contributing commentator regarding trends, fame and personal/corporate branding for [CNN](#), [ABC](#), [CBS](#), [FOX](#), Public Radio's *Marketplace* and the [Huffington Post](#). A sought-after speaker and media trainer, Laermer has keynoted speaking engagements in 18 countries, and his [recognition for success](#) has propelled him to the forefront of helping manage and initiate change. A prolific writer of all things askew, his work has been featured all over the journalism map—The New York Times, Washington Post, NY Daily News, USA Today, Us Weekly, New York, Reuters and others. He is author of [2011: Trendspotting for the Next Decade](#); [Punk Marketing: Get Off Your Ass and Join the Revolution](#); [TrendSpotting: Think Forward, Get Ahead, Cash in on the Future](#); and [Full Frontal PR](#). Follow Richard Laermer's on Twitter at [@laermer](#) and participate in HTF club-specific tweets at [@HowtoFame](#).

SEND THIS

[Pass along a copy](#) of this manifesto to others.

SUBSCRIBE

[Sign up for our free e-newsletter](#) to learn about our latest manifestos as soon as they are available.

BORN ON DATE

This document was created on May 5, 2010 and is based on the best information available at that time.

ABOUT CHANGETHIS

[ChangeThis](#) is a vehicle, not a publisher. We make it easy for big ideas to spread. While the authors we work with are responsible for their own work, they don't necessarily agree with everything available in ChangeThis format. But you knew that already.

ChangeThis is supported by the love and tender care of 800-CEO-READ. Visit us at [800-CEO-READ](#) or at our daily [blog](#).

COPYRIGHT INFO

The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License. To view a copy of this license, visit [Creative Commons](#) or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA.

Cover image from [Veer Marketplace](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You are given the unlimited right to print this manifesto and to distribute it electronically (via email, your website, or any other means). You can print out pages and put them in your favorite coffee shop's windows or your doctor's waiting room. You can transcribe the author's words onto the sidewalk, or you can hand out copies to everyone you meet. You may not alter this manifesto in any way, though, and you may not charge for it.