The first video in the Cane Connections Video Series introduced Dr. Woody’s VIPER model for creating a YOU plan. VIPER is about asking yourself 5 fundamental questions:

**What are your VALUES?** Your values must drive your career decisions. When your values aren’t aligned with those of your employer, business partner or customer base, success will be elusive. Think hard about what you truly value. Often, the values we espouse aren’t necessarily our own. Many of our values are imposed upon us through religion, upbringing, culture, and employers. Take stock of your values and ask yourself whether or not you live them. If you want to know if something is truly a value you embrace, ask yourself:

- Am I willing to fight for it?
- Am I willing to sacrifice for it?
- Am I willing to pay for it?

**What are your INTRINSICS?** Your intrinsics are what you bring to the table. I like to think of intrinsics as the deck of cards that represent your life. There are some at the top of the deck that you have recently played and know well and there are others shuffled throughout the deck that haven’t come up in a while and may be of value. Putting together a winning hand means going through your deck and considering what combinations will work for the game at hand. Your intrinsics are made up of what I call your career PACERS:

- Personality
- Affiliations
- Contributions
- Experience
- Relationships
- SKAs (skills, knowledge, abilities)

**What are your PASSIONS?** Your passions are what excite you. Passion is the enthusiasm and engagement that gets you out of bed in the morning. Unfortunately, as Americans we spend most of our waking hours working. What’s more, most of us are not passionate about what we do. In one study by the Conference Board, only 45% of respondents said they were satisfied with their current job. Lack of satisfaction means stress and disengagement. Passion and work may never be perfectly aligned, but you can definitely make a lot of headway in this area if you are willing to explore your passions.
**What is your ESSENCE?** Your essence is what you are about. Once you have a grasp of your Values, Intrinsics, and Passions (or VIPs) you should be able to answer the question: What is your essence or brand? In other words, what do you project as your value. Branding is about packaging yourself in a way that succinctly portrays your value proposition and demonstrates why someone would want to hire you. Ask yourself:

- What do people know about me?
- What do I represent or what am I about?
- What value do I bring to the table?
- What differentiates me from others who offer the same?

**What is your ROADMAP?** As a job seeker, you are now in the business of sales. Your job is to sell the YOU brand. Any good sales person will tell you that selling is about managing activity and having a plan. Once you have a sense of your brand and the package you need to take to market, it’s time to create a YOU Plan. In building your roadmap, you must:

- Set interim goals
- Identify reasonable milestones
- Identify targets
- Develop an activity schedule
- Create a timeline
- Get out there and make it happen

**Leverage your Cane Connections!!!**

I can’t emphasize enough the vital role that relationships play in career success. As you go through and answer each of the VIPER questions, be sure to consider how you can tap into the power of the University of Miami Alumni Network. It’s all about Canes helping Canes!

Good luck,

Dr. Woody

Michael “Dr. Woody” Woodward, PhD – A.B. ’95