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Monday, November 9, 2010 marked the release of yet another title in the often controversial “Call of Duty” video game franchise and, with that, the release of controversial advertising. Of particular note is the below commercial featuring Kobe Bryant and Jimmy Kimmel in a no-holds-barred shootout meant to illustrate the experience of on-line gameplay.

Not surprisingly, Kobe came under fire for this since, in the minds of some commentators, his appearance is apparently the equivalent of condoning real gun violence (see [here](#)).

Leaving aside the socially charged argument about whether violence in video games is a legitimate cause for concern or merely a “cause célèbre,” I am becoming fascinated by how contemporary conversations about athlete or celebrity faux pas are beginning to include discussions of the effects on the individual’s personal brand.

After LeBron James’s ill-conceived “[Decision](#),” there was debate about the extent to which it hurt his personal brand. After Tiger Woods got busted for his infidelities, there was as much debate about the [endorsement dollars lost](#) as there was about the content of his character.



[The list](#) goes on: Michael Phelps, Michael Vick, Kobe Bryant (again), Wayne Rooney (for all you futbol fans out there). The effect on the personal brand is as hotly debated as the merits of the story.

At the end of the day, this is probably all just a natural consequence of our all-day, everyday culture. Whether its good or bad, the fact is personal endorsements are no longer simply appearances in a 30-second commercial, they're a 24-hour job where every single action impacts your brand. This isn't entirely new, but now, there appears to be an added element. Not only are consumers considering the scandal, they are considering businesses' reaction to the scandal. As a business, you can't simply sit back and see how the scandal affects your bottom line, you need to think about how the consuming public will react to your treatment of the scandal.



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