

12 Ways to Position Yourself as an Expert

By Nikolas Allen, *BAM! Small Biz Consulting*

Consumers want to do business with people they trust. If you're a solopreneur or small business owner, you must gain the trust of your audience by positioning yourself as an expert in their minds. There are a variety of methods and tools, both online and off, that you can use to educate your audience with information demonstrating your knowledge and your expertise.

Since your brand is a perception in the minds of your audience, the first step in positioning yourself as an expert is to determine what you want to stand for. Remember, experts are specialists, not generalists, so pick one area of expertise and run with it.

Here are a dozen ways to share your expertise with the world:

- 1) Maintain a Blog – Blogging is a great platform for educating your audience. Once you choose a specific topic, provide valuable information on that topic with regular posts and rich media content. Your blog is your home base, so all the following tools should be used to drive traffic back there.
- 2) Guest Posts on other Blogs – There are plenty of other people in your industry sharing ideas on the same topic. Many of them are in need of content for their blog, so connect with them. Offer to trade guest posts and cross-pollinate your audience. Be sure you are able to include a photo, bio and link back to your site at the end of your post.
- 3) Articles – If you love to write, article marketing is a great way to get your name out there. There are newspapers, periodicals and Web sites dedicated to education through articles that you can submit to, which will drive interested readers back to your site. Google the phrase “article marketing sites” to find the sites that resonate with you.
- 4) E-books – A great way to turn your information into a product. You can either sell your e-book on your site, or offer it as a free download in exchange for joining your mailing list. This is a great technique to educate your audience and grow your mailing list at the same time.
- 5) Newsletters – Another way to grow your mailing list is to offer a monthly newsletter that provides links, tools and tips that educate and engage your audience. Be sure it passes the “What’s in it for me” test and provides value to your readers in addition to letting them know what you’ve been up to.
- 6) Social Media – Instead of tweeting or posting about everything in your life, stick to a specific topic. People should be able to tell your area of expertise by a quick glance at your tweet stream or Facebook wall. When filling in your bio section, resist the temptation to include everything you do. Stick to the ONE THING you want to be known for.

12 Ways to Position Yourself as an Expert

7) Videos – Create a YouTube Channel and produce videos based on your topic of expertise. They can be fun, informative videos, detailed how-to's, interviews with people in your industry, or unexpected behind-the-scenes footage. Post them on your blog and use all your marketing channels to cross-promote them.

8) Podcasts – Create a weekly podcast to discuss issues, news and trends in your industry. Check out podbean.com for free publishing and hosting options. Once you're set up, you can submit your podcasts to iTunes for distribution.

9) Radio and Cable TV appearances – Look for public radio and television stations in your area. Get familiar with their format and take advantage of any opportunities to call in, offer your opinion, be interviewed or promote an upcoming event that is of interest to the community. These stations usually don't allow anything overtly commercial, so leave the self-promotion for your paid advertising.

10) Speaking Engagements – This is a great way to get your brand known in the community and “prove” your expertise to your audience. Look for professional organizations, groups and chambers of commerce in your area who would find your topic relevant, and offer to speak at an upcoming meeting. You may have to do it for free in the beginning, but it could turn into a source of income once you are established.

11) Workshops and Seminars – Put on a workshop or seminar either by yourself, or pull several partners together who can offer complimentary information and education to create a full-spectrum offering that people would pay to attend.

12) Demonstrations – An especially innovative or technical product can create a barrier between consumers and their purchase. Nobody likes to feel ignorant, so offer frequent, easy, fun demonstrations to educate your audience. This can be done in person, or take the form of some of the aforementioned media.

As you can see, there are myriad ways to position yourself as an expert. With all these options, it's essential to determine which methods will best reach your target audience. After all, it takes an ongoing commitment to maintain any of these channels, and if nobody is there to consume your expertise, you're simply wasting your time. So choose wisely and have fun!

Heavyweight Marketing Champion, Nikolas Allen, runs BAM! Small Biz Consulting, where he helps small business owners attract more loyal customers and grow their business through creative branding and marketing strategies. To schedule your Free 30-Minute Needs Assessment, contact Nikolas at www.bamsmallbizconsulting.com.