

Jim's Guide to Becoming An Expert!

What is Expert Status and Why is it Necessary?

Do you have an online business? If you do, the second question is how are you doing? The bottom line is always the uppermost concern in your mind. To that end, creating expert status may be just the thing to catapult your business to the next level.

What is Expert Status?

Well, it is comprised of many things actually. Mostly, it is a tool to increase the number of people who patronize your online business. It involves raising your visibility level. Potential customers have to know that you exist before they can visit, get advice and buy your products.

But, you knew that already. You've told all of your friends and family, and also your church members and co-workers that you have begun an online venture. Your marketing strategy has served you well so far to draw traffic, but you wish you were doing better.

Here's a question: When you need help, who do you go to? Hopefully you seek out someone who knows what they are talking about on the subject. They are the experts and that is what you want to be.

Why Become an Expert?

Experts are not necessarily know-it-all people. They just know a lot about their chosen subject. As an online business owner, you had an interest in the niche you chose for your business enterprise. That alone means that you know a great deal more than the average person about your topic.

People like experts. They are the go-to person who takes the headache out of your research. If your information is helpful, these people will come back to you over and over again and bring others with them.

It sounds like a lot of work but it is well worth it. Besides, you love your chosen business niche (that's why you are in business) and you were going to do the work anyway. So why not reap the additional benefits of being an expert?

Experts have several things going for them:

- Can demand higher pay rates
- Credibility
- Increased visibility
- A sphere of influence

What's the necessity?

Expert status lifts you head and shoulders above the rest in your field. Where they KNOW about the basics of the niche, you go deeper to provide your customers with a better understanding of what you can offer them. That translates into many more dollars and cents.

So, are you interested in expert status now? It is a worthwhile venture for your online business that creates a win-win situation. The next step is to implement strategies to begin marketing yourself as an expert in your business area.

Creating Expert Status: Networking

You may know a lot about your business niche, but does anyone else know that? If not, it's time to set yourself up as an expert.

Sometimes it is WHO you know that counts, like when you're trying to accomplish something and need help. On the path towards expert status, you will need others to reach the destination.

I know, I know – you are not the type of person to shamelessly self promote. Don't worry because there is no shame involved. To do any less, than tell others about what you have worked hard to learn, is selling yourself short and that IS shameful. Even for shy people, networking with others in the business world can only help. What makes it a bit easier is that you and those you network with are all after a common goal – increased profits.

Why Network?

Networking is important in business. Making connections with others in the online world increases your visibility which matters when you want to get noticed. Who do you rub elbows with? Begin with someone with influence in your business area like a guru of sorts. Get to know them by hanging out where they hang out – on their blog, in their social networking groups and by attending events they host or are speaking at.

Networking mutually benefits both parties. While you are getting to know them, don't forget to let them know who you are. When you comment on blogs, link those comments to your own blog and/or website. If you host a podcast, invite them to be a guest.

Other Ways to Network

Blogs and forums are not the only way that you can make a useful business connection to promote your expert business status. Join local and online business associations. This is not in name only. Do our part and get involved so that others see your face, hear your voice and notice your work.

Your involvement in these professional organizations is a two-way street. Use the time to give but also get. Ask questions when you need to. Sharing business tips, tricks and secrets is a part of the perks.

Don't neglect the social networking communities. Facebook and MySpace are a lot of fun for connecting with old friends, but they are also big forums for sharing business information. You can post new happenings on your website and links. You'll be surprised who sees and takes advantage of the news. Invite all of your fellow organizational members as well as clients and other business associates to be your friends so they can view posts to your Wall.

Networking can be intimidating especially for business owners who are not good at self-promotion. But, once you begin, you'll notice the benefits and get hooked.

Creating Expert Status: Writing Articles

What's the first thing you notice when you click on a website? There are words everywhere! No matter what other media marketing tools you use on your site, the ones that people still gravitate towards include words. Use article marketing to help you gain expert status as an online business owner.

Why Articles?

You might be wondering about articles. Perhaps you have shied away from them up until now because you don't write very well. Maybe your 11th grade English teacher scared the bejeebers out of you with her killer writing assignments. You don't have to go into therapy to write an article – simply write what you know.

Articles are the quickest and easiest way to drive traffic to your site. When people type all of those keywords into search engines, they are looking for information. It can come in a variety of forms but the one that most people know and are comfortable with is the article format. On your website, hopefully you have some form of content displayed there to keep your visitors happy.

Writing the Articles

Since you know a lot about the subject of your business, use that knowledge to elevate yourself to the level of expert. With what is trapped in your head, you could probably write a hundred articles.

How should you write? Create a list of topics that are related to your business. Because the subject is familiar, it will probably only take you about 30 minutes to write a 400 word article. This length is pretty normal for blog posts and article directories.

Did I mention article directories? These are the places where you will be submitting your articles to gain visibility. When you write articles, use the bio box to provide a link to your website so interested readers can find your business.

Some types of articles work better than others when it comes to promoting an expert status:

- How-To Pieces
- Tips
- Article Packs/Reports

With how-to articles and tips, you are sure to gain the reader's attention with bulleted and numbered points. Using numbers in the title also alert the reader that your work is something they want to check out. When you can put what you know into a format like this, you actually become an instant expert. And, the writing is fairly straightforward for those who doubt their skills.

An article pack can be created from ten or so articles that you have written on a similar subject. Marketing them on your site as a guide to "Learning Internet marketing" or whatever the subject of your business is.

Writing and submitting articles will get you noticed. Linking them to your website can increase your sales as you go from business owner to business expert.

Creating Expert Status: Using Your Noggin, Not Your Muscle

Achieving expert status is not all hard work. What it takes is a mind that is open and knowledgeable about their business subject. With a little bit of creativity, you can leverage what you do already to increase sales and product variety.

The first part of any strategy you use to become an expert is visibility. Others have to know that you exist and have something important to say. Through article writing and distribution and networking with other business owners, your “sphere of influence” will begin to grow.

But you are still just scratching the surface. Wouldn't you like to take advantage of tools that help you become an expert without expert work? We figured that you might. So, here are some ways that you can do that.

The Pitch...

Let's say that you have been writing articles and submitting them to article directories. You might have even written enough to be considered an expert on a certain topic on that site. Ezinearticles.com has experts who blog, answer questions, write articles and provide other multimedia content. Having that label there is a big boost for your business.

The Hit...

Those articles are not just articles but pages of potential. One piece of written content can give rise to another. Look at your articles with new eyes. See them turning into:

- eBooks
- Special Reports
- Audio products
- Video products
- Course material
- Seminars

The list goes on but you get the idea. The information in the articles can morph into each one of these. Better yet, take a series of articles, bundle them to create a special report or an eBook if there is a lot of information. Take each section of the eBook and create a course that customers can buy. Add audio and video to the course and turn your course material into a study guide to accompany them.

It's Out of the Park...

Instead of one solitary article that has increased your visibility through article marketing you now have leveraged that article into a variety of product offerings all of which will add to your expert status and your bottom line. Instead of the press release saying that you have written hundreds of articles, it will also say that you the author of several eBooks, business courses and a lecturer. If that doesn't say expert nothing does.

If you have a bunch of articles floating around in cyberspace or just sitting on your PC, give them a second look. Each one can bring a new product for sale and a new path to expert status for you.

Create Expert Status: Increase Your Visibility

You may have a strong business idea and a great product, but are you doing everything you can to be seen by the right people? Increasing your visibility can change the way that potential customers see your business.

Visibility is the glue that holds all other strategies together when it comes to achieving expert status as a business owner. Each strategy gets your name out among other business owners, movers and shakers and potential clients. Being seen goes a long way with the word-of-mouth crowd.

Here are a few ways that you can increase your visibility:

- Take advantage of all opportunities that come your way
- Attend business seminars
- Public speaking
- Write press releases
- Start a blog
- Publish a newsletter

If you are comfortable doing what you are doing and it works for you, still try at least one or two of these ideas. No one ever made a fortune playing it safe or being comfortable. That comes later on when you are the Big Cheese. Trying new things to elevate yourself within your business is a part of the process. And, it can be fun to learn just how good you are.

Some business owners are too picky. They want to do certain things to achieve expert status. This goes back to the issue of comfort level. When you are on Facebook and a fellow business owner is looking for speakers for his online conference or a local event in your area, throw your hat in the ring.

Someone in one of your associations needs advice or a speaker for the next meeting? Take that spot for yourself. Every opportunity places another feather in your cap. It is a point that you can add to your bio and also your press releases for new products or events.

And, you can create newsletters for your customers. Sending a monthly or quarterly newsletter about your business gives you the chance to add information about accomplishments that have occurred since the last newsletter. Each solidifies your expert status in the eyes of current and potential customers. Newsletters can be printed and passed around to others.

Once you put all of this in place, keep a monthly check on your ventures to be sure that they are still bringing about the desired effect. Some of it won't require much tweaking just checking in with the movers and shakers to be sure they still know your name.

Achieving expert status inspires confidence on the part of customers and fellow business owners. Increasing your visibility is the first step and the information in this article can help you do just that.

So the only thing left to do is just go do it!

Best wishes for much success!

Jim



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