
INTRODUCTION
TO
AUTHORITY
MARKETING

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Introduction

Many people dream about becoming an authority in their field. Becoming a well-known niche expert is something that can be immensely useful, not to mention profitable, but getting to that point is usually no small feat.

In this guide we'll go over what being an authority means, why it's something to strive for, how to get there and what to do once you've climbed all the way to the top of the mountain.

Among other things, you'll learn:

- What it means to become an authority, and why it's important to become one
- The benefits and perks of being an authority
- How to carry yourself to ensure that you're seen and respected as an authority in your field
- The exact steps you can take to become an authority, even if you're starting from scratch
- How to proceed once you've reached the goals you set out for yourself
- ...and much more!

The power of authority

What it means

People have always looked up to experts and authority figures, seeking them out for advice and following their recommendations. The word of an established authority weighs heavy for anyone who's trying to make some sort of decision, be it something personal or something they're looking to buy. That's probably the reason why 99% of all toothpaste commercials feature a person dressed up to look like a dentist - a trusted expert/authority figure. Even if he's not actually a dentist, and most of us know in our minds that he's really just an actor, our subconscious can't help but see him as an authority figure anyway and trust his advice. That's the power of authority.

Essentially it's all about combing expert knowledge with a consistent personal branding effort. You simply need as many people as possible within your field to recognize *you* as one of the leading experts, and someone they can trust. Just having the knowledge and doing good work isn't enough - if no one knows who you are you'll never gain authority status anyway.

Becoming an authority in your field is rarely easy, however. In many ways it's similar to becoming a celebrity, and anyone who sets out to establish themselves as an authority in their field needs to be prepared to put in the work and allow it to take time. This isn't something that's done in a week, or even a year.

The good news, though, is that it's not a binary on-or-off situation where you're at 0% for a long time and then suddenly "make it". You'll start seeing some benefits quite soon on your journey, providing you're doing it right, and those benefits should be more than enough to keep you pumped and motivating you to continue climbing.

Why it's important

In our daily lives we're constantly bombarded with people and ads telling us what to do, what to think, what to buy. Thankfully we're usually able to filter out information that we deem irrelevant or not trustworthy. We don't listen to just anyone. If a random person on the street told you he's going to invest

\$10,000 in a specific stock you'd probably wish him good luck and count yourself lucky that you're not the one gambling your money away on the stock market. But, if that person was Warren Buffett you'd probably be on the phone, calling a stock broker two seconds after the conversation ended. Why is that?

It's simple really: Warren Buffett is a Wall Street authority. Over the years he's built a reputation that makes people see him as an expert investor. You know he's the real deal, and if he was to give you a top secret, insider stock tip you'd probably listen to every word he had to say.

The same is true in any other field. The word of a reputable expert is always treated like gold, whether that expert is a plumber, a doctor or a personal development guru. And, it's the person who's put in the effort with personal branding that is most likely to achieve that expert status.

Say you were to launch an SEO marketing firm. Selling your services would be a lot easier if you were well-known and highly regarded within the SEO industry. Who do you think people would rather hire? The guy with 10,000 Twitter followers who consistently delivers ground-breaking SEO case studies, or the "nobody" who's been working quietly behind the scenes for 20 years, never sharing his techniques with anyone?

Even if they're on the same skill level, and have both had major success in their field, it's safe to assume that the first guy is well ahead in terms of authority and therefore much more likely to gain the business of people looking for an SEO expert.

What the benefits are

The benefits of establishing yourself as an authority in your field are numerous. When done right it's almost like a real life "cheat code" that puts you in a position where opportunity knocks at every turn.

People will take your advice seriously and listen carefully to what you have to say. Even if they won't always agree with you they will always respect your opinion.

You will gain a loyal following that take all your recommendations to heart. If you were to recommend a specific product you can bet that many of these followers will buy it, trusting your word that it's something that they could benefit from. Just look at what happens when a celebrity doctor endorses a new diet product on TV - instantly it starts selling in the millions, just based on the *exposure + authority figure* formula.

As an established authority it will be easier than ever to make money. People will be fighting for a chance to work with you. Say you're a big authority in the fitness niche, having built up a large following and a solid reputation. In a normal, average week you may be contacted by people who want to pitch you their product ideas for joint ventures, people who offer you money to endorse their products, invitations to speak at events and countless other things. All potential moneymakers and chances to keep improving your personal brand and authority status.

There are, of course, a couple of potential downsides too. One is that the more famous you get, the more people will approach you looking for handouts and free advice. It may not sound like a big issue, but the fact is that recognized authorities in larger fields can get hundreds of these requests every single day, and it is bound to wear you down after a while.

Another issue is that leading experts are under constant scrutiny. They need to mind what they're doing at all times so they don't risk damaging their personal brand. What if a leading fitness guru who's been preaching a clean, healthy lifestyle was caught on camera smoking and eating at McDonald's? That would be detrimental to their image and authority status. Same if a leading "white-hat" SEO expert was caught buying spam links - definitely not good!

All in all though, the advantages far outweigh the potential downsides. The benefits are simply great and well worth going that extra mile for.

Takeaways

- Becoming an authority means having people look up to you, trusting your advice and following your recommendations
- Just being an expert on something is not enough to become a recognized authority, personal branding and marketing is required too

- In many ways it's similar to becoming a celebrity of sorts within a niche
- While the journey may be long there are many rewards along the way - it isn't necessary to be #1 in a niche to get some benefits
- Working quietly behind the scenes is not a good strategy to become an authority - you will have to be open and happy to share your knowledge to succeed
- Once you become an authority you'll find that opportunities practically jump into your lap without much effort, since "everyone" will want to work with you
- Most people respect the opinions of authorities, even if they don't always agree with them
- Building up a loyal following means having a target audience that are willing to act on your recommendations
- One potential downside is that authorities are constantly asked for help and free handouts by those who don't want to put in the hard work themselves
- Another potential downside is the increased scrutiny most authorities find themselves under

Carry yourself like an authority

If you want people to see you as an authority you need to carry yourself like one. Fortunately that doesn't have to be very hard, but there are a few things you should keep in mind and try to do:

Help people

Every time you get a chance to help someone out - take it! Even if there is no apparent upside for you to do so. Helping people without asking for anything in return is an excellent way to forge new relationships and gain a loyal following. Of course that doesn't mean you should spend 8 hours per day helping people out for free, but reasonable requests for help should always be considered. You can bet that the people you help will be telling all their friends what a helpful, friendly and knowledgeable guy you are, further cementing your authority status.

Go the extra mile

If there's one thing that truly helps when trying to become an authority figure, it's going the extra mile with everything you do. If you're blogging, strive to make every post a masterpiece. If you're on Twitter, be more active and put out better tweets than your competitors. Look at what other, established authorities in your niche are doing, and work harder than them. Go the extra mile. It will pay off eventually!

Network

The more people you know who can vouch for your expertise and help spread the word about your endeavors, the better. You should always be on the lookout for networking opportunities, whether it's online or in real life. Don't be too quick to rule out potential new connections either, as you never know who or what may be helpful in the long run. A person who may not be of much practical use to you now could very well end up being the number one contributor to your success in the future. Embrace every networking opportunity and don't risk missing out on potential benefits.

Take the initiative

If you stumble upon an opportunity to take charge and lead a project, take it! There's no better way to prove your expertise and put you in a position where people take your advice and follow your instructions.

Be humble

A true expert doesn't need to brag or purposely try to convince others how great they are. That said, not even mentioning your skills or how successful you are would also be detrimental when you're trying to position yourself as a leading authority in your field. Try to find a balance where people are aware of your knowledge and success but you're not constantly trying to remind them of it.

Never be rude or condescending

Yes, some authority figures can get away with being rude or looking down on people, simply because they've earned the right to do so. If you've ever seen *House* (the TV show) you're probably quite familiar with this. However, consider that an exception from the rule. Most of us do a lot better being friendly and courteous. If you find yourself in a heated argument (you're bound to sooner or later as you make yourself more visible), take a step back and think twice before pulling out the big guns. If you slip up there is big risk it will haunt you for a long time and it's simply not worth it. Be the bigger man and keep your authority status safe.

Admit when you're wrong

Some leading experts would rather jump from a bridge than admit that they're wrong about something. In the end it can make them look rather foolish. Most industries, online and offline, are constantly changing and evolving, and even a leading authority cannot be expected to always keep up with it all. Sooner or later you'll run into a situation where you're just plain wrong, and admitting it is always better than being stubborn and acting like you could never be wrong about anything. People will simply respect you more if you admit it!

Don't be afraid of controversy

When you're trying to build up your authority status your natural instinct may be to shy away from controversy in order to not alienate anyone. However, a little bit of controversy can do wonders for your personal brand. The thing to remember here is that not everyone has to agree with you - they just have to respect your opinion.

If you see a chance to state an opinion that has the potential for controversy, and you actually firmly do believe that you're right, go ahead and let everyone know! If you're right, you'll be credited with knowing better than everyone else, and if you're wrong, at least you've gotten your name out there. As said before though, don't be afraid to actually admit it if it turns out you were wrong.

Takeaways

- Take every chance you get to help people - it's a great way to establish yourself as a teacher and authority, not to mention the positive impression you'll make on people
- Always try to go the extra mile and do just a bit more than your competitors are willing to, whether it's being more active on social media or blogging more often
- The more people you know, the easier it'll be to become an authority, so focus heavily on networking
- Try to be a person who takes charge and acts like a leader
- Even if you know more than most people in your niche, don't brag about it - being humble is key to becoming an authority that people not only respect but also like
- You should also make sure you're never rude or condescending as that will only make you look insecure
- Admitting when you're wrong or you've made a mistake will make people relate to you
- Stirring up just a little bit of controversy may not always be a bad thing...

Actionable steps to become an authority

Becoming an authority, in any field, is not easy. Not only do you need to know more and have better skills than everyone else in your niche, but you also need to market yourself properly and network with others. The exact path you should take is up to you, of course, but in this chapter you'll find suggested steps that everyone who's trying to become an authority in their field should consider. Give everything a fair consideration and don't rule anything out too fast, as you never know what'll work unless you try it all.

Write and publish a book

If you want to be treated like an expert in your field, there is arguably no better way than writing a book and having it published. Nothing wrong with Kindle books and information products, but a real hardcopy book (not self-published) is a lot more impressive since the barrier to entry is much higher. If it sells well then great, if not you can still benefit a lot from it just from the status it gives you to have had a book published. The next time someone questions your authority on the subject, just point to your book and they're likely to change their opinion about you real quick...

If you're lucky enough to pull off a bestseller in your niche you can bet on it to open a lot of doors for you. It may take a few tries to get there, and no doubt there is a lot of work involved, but it is well worth the effort.

It's understandable that writing a whole book might seem daunting, but if you just take it one chapter at a time it doesn't have to be so bad. If you're knowledgeable about the topic but feel like writing isn't really your thing, you can always hire a ghostwriter to write it for you.

Start a blog

If you feel you have a lot to say about your topic, consider starting your own blog. It's a great way to show off your expertise and personality. Fact is, if you want true expert status in your niche, you'll find it very difficult to reach your goal without a blog or some other kind of outlet where people can learn from you and get some insight into who you are. It will also act as a "business card" of sorts that you can refer people you meet to, so make sure you use a domain

name that's easy to remember (usually a .com is preferable over others). Not to mention the opportunities you can find by simply networking and interacting with other bloggers in your niche, so remember to stay active in discussions.

Don't worry if you don't consider yourself much of a writer - as long as you've got something interesting to say, people will listen. Usually writing in a laid-back, casual tone and using a spellchecker is sufficient.

A common problem with blogs is that after a couple of years (sometimes even months), the owner runs out of things to blog about, or simply gets tired of the constant writing. This is something you'll have to plan for and do your best to avoid, as it's without a doubt the most common reason why some promising blogs never reach their full potential.

Guest blog and publish articles

When you're just starting to build up your authority status, chances are you're an unknown nobody in your niche. Even if you have a ton of interesting insights to share on your blog and social networks, you need to draw traffic and eyeballs to them somehow. Guest blogging and writing articles for other websites (maybe even magazines) are great for that!

The more readers the blog or website you want to write for has, the harder it will usually be to get your article accepted. Some popular blogs get dozens of guest blogging requests every week, and you need to make sure you stand out. It definitely helps if you're familiar enough with the site/magazine to know what kind of content they're looking for so you can tailor your proposal accordingly.

Usually you'll have to start writing for some smaller sites, as the larger and more popular ones will probably want to see other articles you've had published before. You can then refer them to your articles on those smaller sites, and slowly work your way up to the most visited sites in your niche. It may take some time but along the way you will gain more and more recognition, and even direct traffic to your blog from links in the "author bio" section of the articles.

Build a social media presence

If you want to become an authority you need some sort of social media presence, there's simply no way around it. That doesn't mean you have to spend 4 hours every day interacting on social networks, but you should at the very least try to participate once a day.

Which sites to use depends on both your own personal preference as well as the preference of the "community" in general in your niche. In some niches Twitter is king, others seem to prefer Facebook, Pinterest or Google +. If you're uncertain of where to put in most of your efforts, just look at what other authorities in your niche are doing. Are they spending most of their day tweeting, discussing in Facebook groups or something else? Look towards what they're doing and try to do it better - just don't straight up copy their approach.

Social networks aren't for everyone, and it seems that most people either enjoy them or hate them. If you're in the latter group you could try to find the social media outlet that you like the most and focus only on that. As long as you're doing something and participating *somewhere*, it's much better than not having a social media presence at all.

Participate on industry forums

If there are any active forums in your niche you should make it one of your main goals to become a well known member of them, perhaps even a moderator. Forums might be considered "old school" by some, but the fact remains that many of them get thousands of visitors every day, and members who take the time to participate can quite easily build up their authority on that particular forum (and in the niche in general).

The same basic rules apply as on social media - try to login and participate in discussions at least once per day. The more the better, of course. Yes, it is definitely time-consuming but the potential rewards are great. When you're an established member of a forum you'll enjoy plenty of perks, such as the ability to draw traffic to your own blog/site. You can also use the forums for announcements, like if you were to write a book and wanted to announce the launch.

In the beginning, though, you should focus on just being helpful and not the slightest bit self promoting. Just like most other methods, this is a marathon and if you go too fast in the beginning you won't be able to make it to the finish line. Just stick to answering questions and maybe posting a discussion of your own once in a while and you'll see results eventually.

Teach others what you know

Taking on a teaching role is an excellent way to improve your authority. Ever since we were kids we've been told to respect the authority of teachers, and that's something that stays with us. And, by all means, someone who decides to set aside the time and effort required to teach others deserves that respect.

Exactly how you choose to go about it is up to you. You can stick to simply writing tutorials and guides, or you can go "all in" and launch a full course where you teach people everything you know. Either way, to be truly successful with this path you need to be patient and prepare for answering a *lot* of questions. Teaching can be quite draining, but also very rewarding when you see that your "students" are learning from you.

Don't jump into the more advanced forms of teaching until you've already started to make a name for yourself though, as you need people to already trust you and your abilities. If it's not commonly accepted that you're an expert in your niche you may not yet have the credibility required to start teaching. Starting small by publishing tutorials and guides could be a great first step to gain that credibility before launching a full course.

Network with other experts in your niche

Just associating and networking with other experts in your niche will do much for your reputation and authority. It is also a great way to stay updated with the latest developments in your niche.

Many highly successful experts participate in mastermind groups on a regular basis. Trying to befriend the top authorities in your niche and getting an invite to their mastermind group (if they have one) should be one of your main goals to work towards. Usually people in mastermind groups are very helpful, regularly exchanging knowledge and favors. For example, how much would it

help to have one of the largest bloggers in your niche plug your own blog on their social media accounts? It could potentially send thousands of visitors, and have you go from a complete nobody to a recognized authority overnight. That's just how powerful this can be.

As always though, you will probably not be able to jump straight into the elite layer of your niche, but rather start small and work your way up. In many cases starting your own mastermind group and inviting other experts in your niche to it is the way to go when you're just starting out. Just make sure you have something to offer them to make it worth their while.

Speak at events

This is another situation where you'll most likely need to start small, unless you've already built up some reputation and credibility in your niche. Once you've reached a point where people are actually interested in hearing what you say, though, public speaking is an excellent way to cement your status as an authority in your niche.

When you're just starting out, consider focusing on getting a spot at a smaller industry event. You will still need to be able to prove your abilities though, so it helps if you at least have a blog and a small following already. You should also plan in detail what you're going to talk about before reaching out, so you can give them all the details they need and convince them that you'll do a good job.

Most people aren't very comfortable with public speaking, and if you're one of them you might want to consider joining your local Toastmasters group to improve your skills and make it a bit less frightening. It does get easier with practice, and once you've gotten started you'll most likely find it both fun and rewarding.

Host seminars/webinars

While hosting a webinar can easily be done even early on when you're still somewhat unknown, a real-life seminar shouldn't be considered until you've had several successful presentations as a speaker at other events. It's almost like hosting an entire event on your own, relying on your name to attract an audience. It is not something you can do until you've already built up a decent

following and become a household name in your niche. Since hosting a real-life seminar can also be a costly affair you'll most likely have to charge for it - another reason why it's not easily done when you're not an established authority already.

Webinars are different though as they require much less effort from the audience, considering they don't have to show up in person. They just have to logon to a website, see what you have to say, and if they don't like it they can just close the browser window. That said, don't think marketing a webinar is super easy either, because it's not. This is where already being an established member of a forum, having a successful blog, or being active on social media can really pay off, as you can market your webinar through all those channels.

Create a community

An alternative to becoming well known in an established community (like a forum) is building one yourself, positioning yourself as the founder, leader and expert. This may be an especially attractive alternative in niches where there aren't a lot of communities already - otherwise you'll find yourself competing in what could be a very competitive space.

You can use any platform you like, ranging from forums to discussions on social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn. Whenever possible it's usually better to use a self-hosted option like a forum, as that puts you in complete control over the community. There's no harm in starting by creating a Facebook group and then transitioning to a self-hosted forum later on though - in fact that can be a smart thing to do as getting a forum off the ground without an existing audience can be very tough. People simply don't like putting in the effort of participating on what looks like a "dead" forum.

However you choose to do it, be prepared that it will take a lot of time and effort before you've built up your community to a decent size, especially if you're in a smaller niche and starting from scratch. Like most things though, it's something you can take one step at a time. It doesn't have to go from zero to super popular in a week!

Takeaways

- If at all feasible, consider writing and publishing a book to significantly boost your status as an authority in your field
- Blogging is great for both networking with others in your niche as well as giving you an outlet to share your knowledge with others
- To get your name out there when you're just starting out, consider writing articles and blog posts for other websites and/or magazines
- An active social media presence is an absolute must but where and how to do it best is different in every niche, so do some research into what existing authorities in your niche are doing
- Don't underestimate the power of "old school" forums to build up a reputation
- Devoting yourself to teaching others about your niche is an excellent way to build up a loyal following and cement your authority status
- Public speaking and hosting seminars/webinars should definitely be considered if you have the opportunity, even if it may seem daunting at first

I'm an authority - now what?

Okay, so you've put in the hard work and you're finally recognized as an authority in your field. Good work! All you have to do now is make a plan that keeps you in this position indefinitely. This is actually quite important, because if you just sit back and remain passive at this point you will find the status you've worked so hard for slipping slowly away. People are quick to forget and there are always new competitors trying to steal your place in the spotlight, so you've got to take an active approach even if it feels like you've got it made.

Now, exactly *how* active you want to be is up to you. Some people who become authorities in the fields never stop working and improving, while others (deservedly) slow down a bit to enjoy the rewards of their hard work.

Staying active

If you want to stay active, your best bet is simply keeping up with the activities from the last chapter. Chances are there is at least one idea or method you haven't been utilizing fully, in which case now may be a great time to try it out. Maybe you've built a huge following on Facebook but you're still a nobody on Twitter, or you're the top blogger in your niche but you've never written a book.

A lot of people who reach this stage recruit others to help them keep up with their blogging, social media and all the other things that technically do not require their personal attention. That can work very well, as long as it's clear who's actually writing the blog posts or responding on Twitter. There's nothing wrong with building a team to become even better, just don't try to pass it off as if you're doing all of it yourself. Sooner or later someone will see through it, and that could potentially be fatal for your reputation.

Branching out to other niches

If you're still hungry for more you may also want to consider branching out to other, larger niches that are related to the one you've been focusing on. You can almost always go bigger, unless you're already an authority in a huge niche like "health" or "money" (if you are, congratulations!). Actually, it doesn't even

have to be a related niche, what's more important is that your existing audience would be interested in your new focus.

A great example would be Tim Ferris, who got his start as an authority on outsourcing and lifestyle design through his "4-hour work week" book. After that first success he went on to tackle other niches, like fitness ("4-hour body") and cooking ("4-hour chef"). These niches are seemingly completely unrelated, but it works anyway because large parts of his fan base are interested in all of them.

Downshifting

If staying active or branching out to other niches sound like a bit much after all the hard work you've put in, maybe it's time to shift into a lower gear and go into maintenance mode instead. It is definitely possible to keep your authority status while working a bit less, but you need to be smart about it.

The trick is focusing mostly on high impact activities that make a big impression on people, like speaking at larger events, hosting seminars or doing ambitious product launches. You want people to keep talking about you - if you can manage that you really only need one large happening per year. In between those happenings you can spend your time however you want, but it's probably a good idea to keep up your social media presence (even if you're not putting in as much time or effort as you did during your initial authority-building period).

Keep in mind though that this in no way means you can stop evolving and learning new things in your niche. If you want people to keep seeing you as an authority, you must have the knowledge to back it up. Some niches change more quickly than others though, so it's up to you to determine how much time you need to spend on educating yourself.

Stay in touch with your network

Whatever you decide to do, staying active or downshifting, make staying in touch with your network a priority. You've probably worked hard to build it and if you were to disappear off the radar you'd be throwing all that hard work away. At the very least you could just shoot a quick email or Skype message

once in a while to the people you're closest to in your network - it doesn't take much time and is well worth the effort.

Takeaways

- Once you've become an authority in your field you can choose between remaining as active as you've been before, or downshifting and being more selective with what you want to focus on
- If you want to stay active you may want to consider hiring someone to help you with some of your daily tasks, letting you focus on what's fun and rewarding
- Another option is branching out to other niches, ideally related to the one you've successfully conquered
- Downshifting at this point is definitely possible, but keep up at least some of your usual activities (with a focus on high impact stuff like hosting seminars or doing big product launches)
- Whatever you do, don't lose touch with your network even if you choose to downshift and participate a bit less in your niche

Conclusion

By now you should have a pretty good idea about what it means to be an authority and how to get there. As you've probably realized it is not a journey you should embark on unless you're prepared to put in the effort required. You need to dedicate yourself to learning more than everyone else about your niche, and spend much time on marketing yourself and working on your personal branding.

That said, the potential rewards are incredible. Becoming an authority means gaining access to opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach. If you follow the advice and instructions in this guide, and patiently take it one step at a time, you'll have a good shot at making it.

Good luck!