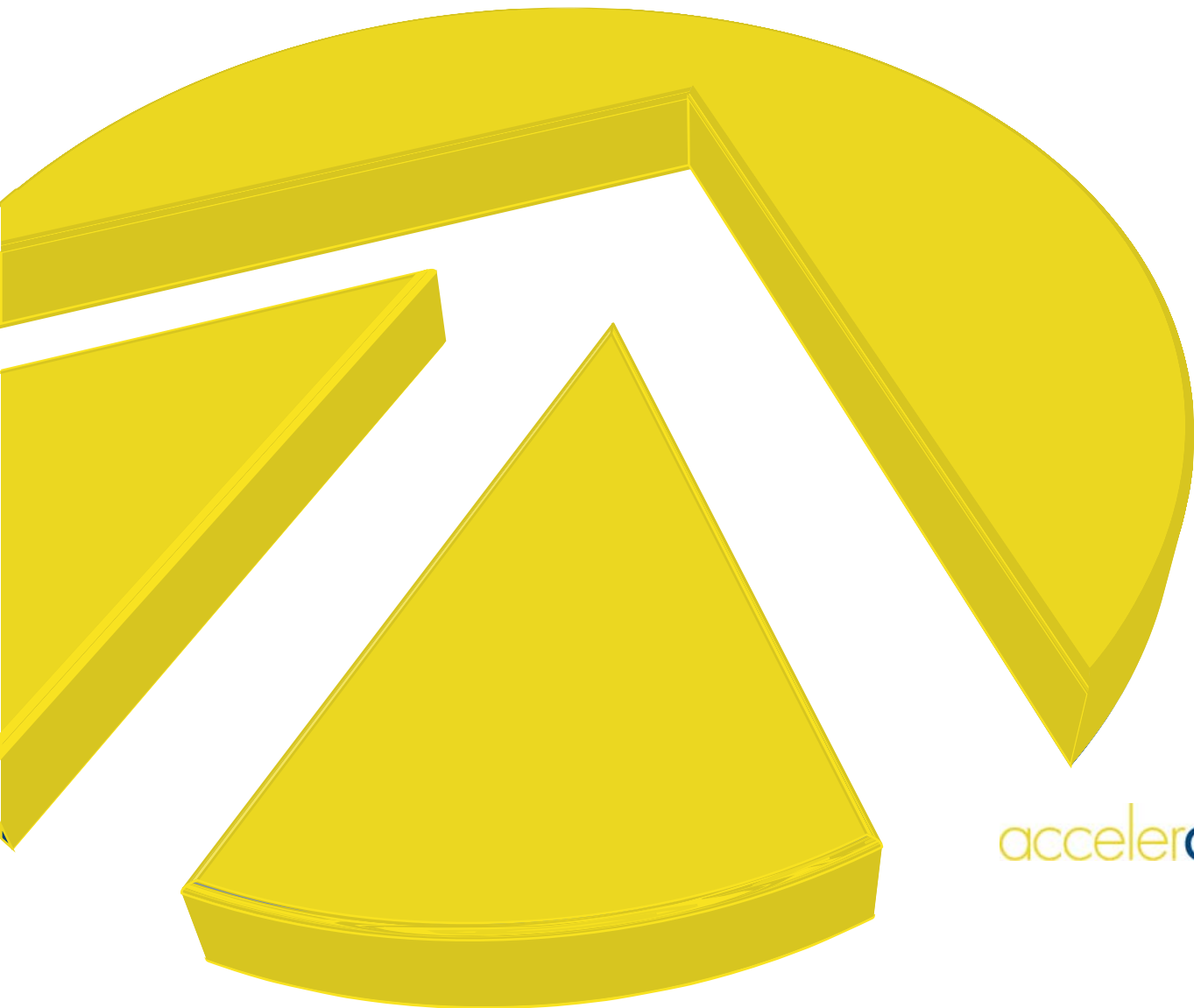


THE EXPERTISE PERSPECTIVE

Getting Known for What You Know



acceleration

The Expertise Perspective – Getting Known for What You Know

One of the best strategies to attract new business is to get known for what you know. When you are able to achieve this, you will get the right kind of business and won't have to work nearly as hard to get it.

What is an expert?

What makes an expert? How do you know that you're an expert in someone else's eyes?

According to the Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition, experts go beyond reciting the rules to understanding how to apply them intuitively to solve problems. They just know how to get it done. They have an innate ability to go from A-Z almost effortlessly by tapping into their knowledge bank and past history.

Additionally, you will find that true experts are thirsty for more knowledge. They are continual learners and are always refining and evolving their approach.

If you want to learn more about "How to Become and Expert: A Roadmap", check out this great article by Litemind. <http://litemind.com/expert-roadmap/>

It's never been easier to move forward. Let's go.

As a professional, you have spent many years learning the technical aspect of your field. You understand the issues that your clients are facing, and instinctively know the right solution. You have expertise; now you need to be recognized for it.

Many professionals think that marketing themselves is a complex, difficult or confusing thing to do. Quite the contrary!

It does take dedication, a little elbow grease and time.

The best news is that you have the skill sets to do it. You didn't build a successful practice just by accident. The same skills you use to build your practice are the same ones you use to market yourself:

Organization, communication, focus, relationship building and execution (or getting it done!).

After years of working with professionals, we've identified a few 'tried and true' tactics that work. We find people are most comfortable choosing marketing tactics that they enjoy. For example if you fear speaking in front of people, writing maybe a better option for you.

Content

Chances are good that you have at least a half dozen ideas

rolling around in your head that can be used to position yourself as an expert. And, if you're really smart, you will ask your clients what legal/accounting or business issue they would like to know more about. These ideas are really your 'content' that

can be easily used for articles, whitepapers, website copy, news releases... the ideas are endless. We encourage you to write them down, with a few sentences of description for each one. Start building a list of content or topics that you feel comfortable writing or speaking about.

THE REAL BENEFITS OF POSITIONING YOURSELF AS AN EXPERT

Clients are attracted to successful professionals. As a leader, you've built credibility and a level of trust within your industry by creating an attraction factor. Wouldn't it be great to have potential clients calling you?

The increased visibility also helps you to be more selective and targeted about the business opportunities that come your way. And better yet, experts charge more. Being an expert allows you to charge a premium for what you do.

This indirect method of promoting your expertise makes it easy for you to continually market yourself in order to keep your pipeline full. As you share your knowledge with clients, you're also positioning your solution as the best solution.



True experts go beyond reciting the rules to understanding how to apply them intuitively.

Writing

Many professionals find it intimidating to write (we all have flashbacks to grammar school English teachers admonishing us for writing mistakes!). The good news is that you know what you are writing about, are passionate about the subject and have experience with it. Figure out what works for you. If free flow writing (just start writing without an outline), works for you, great. Other professionals like to build an outline first. There are a few tips to keep your writing fluid and interesting:

- ⇒ Write it tight. After you've written a draft, look at what you can delete without cutting out major themes or technical information.
- ⇒ Think like the reader. People are scanners, they read headlines, not pages of copy. How can you get the important themes up front quickly?
- ⇒ Cut the jargon. Nothing turns off a reader faster than having to weed through big words or industry jargon. Keep it simple.
- ⇒ Tell stories. Nothing hooks a reader faster than to do a deep dive into a story that vividly describes a problem and how you solved it for client.

Get Published

You've come up with several ideas for content, written a few articles, now you're wondering.... "How do I get published?"

Fortunately, in today's environment, you don't have to solely rely on someone else to publish your writing. You can self-publish through your company newsletter, or perhaps a blog. This is often a great way to start your publishing career.

Getting published in local, industry or trade publications can be a bit trickier. First you need to determine what publications best reach your target market, then you need to sell your article idea to the editor. You do this by giving them enough information so that they can get a clear idea about the content but you don't want to go so far as to send them a written article. If this seems to be overwhelming to you, you may want to reach out to a public relations professional who has experience in pitching stories to the press.



Speaking

The purpose of speaking is to start a relationship with the audience to build your credibility. It's the perfect opportunity to showcase your knowledge while connecting with people. How do you get started? The key is to choose your audience wisely. Find speaking opportunities with industry or trade organizations – they always want speakers. Try to find opportunities where your competitors are not sitting in the audience.

Other ideas:

- ⇒ Speak on a topic that you are passionate about. If you are not passionate about a topic, you will appear stiff and not interesting.
- ⇒ Invite the audience to join in. Set ground rules at the top ("I welcome questions" or "Let's take questions at the end"). Little sneaky tip: If you know someone who is coming to your presentation, give the person a question to ask to start the conversation flowing!
- ⇒ Try to make your presentation a call to action. Think about how you can energize your audience to do SOMETHING.
- ⇒ Oh REHEARSE. Nothing takes the edge off the speaker anxiety than practicing your speech a few

times. Listen for how you deliver key sentences. Are there sentences in your speech that are hard to verbalize? Are you tripping over your tongue? If you're like most of us, you'll also start speaking quickly once you get in front of an audience. Try to slow down your delivery.

Awards

Identifying and applying for business or industry awards is a great way to get your firm noticed. And going through the process helps bring positive news about your firm, creates instantaneous buzz, media exposure, improves your employee morale and can create a bump in business development.

Many communities have award opportunities through a local chamber, organizations or publications. The key is to understand exactly what the criteria is for the award. Is it firm growth? Innovative ideas to provide to clients? Community service? If either you or your firm don't match up in the relevant award criteria, you may want to think about not applying or reworking your firm so you can apply next year.

Associations (Professional, Business and Trade)

We've all been there. The rubber chicken lunch followed by a boring speaker and cold, tasteless coffee. How do you avoid 'random acts of meetings?'

Associations are great vehicles for connecting face to face with prospects. The key is to find the right association that isn't full of lawyers/accountants/consultants/whoever is in your industry at the meeting. Better news yet – Many have robust virtual discussion boards, social media tools that you can participate in without making a meeting. Before you starting writing a check for dues, we suggest that you do a little due diligence of your own.

Before you pay your dues to join an association, do your due diligence.

- Check out the association's website
- Ask others if they have attended the meetings – were they helpful? Interesting?
- Call the membership chair and ask how you can participate once you join.
- Get a list of current members (or at least the names of the member companies)
- Are there committees you can participate in?
- DO YOU HAVE THE TIME! (big one.....no sense in joining and then never participating)
- Finally, to make sure that the association is right for you, we recommend that you attend the association at least twice before you join.

Third Party Endorsements

In her 1985 Oscar acceptance speech, actress Sally Field exclaimed "You like me! You really like me!" If you are doing your job, chances are good you have a few raving fans too. So why not ask them to speak on your behalf? Third party endorsements are the equivalent of a big old slap-on-the-back-you-done-good moment. Ask clients if they would endorse you to others. This can be in the form of a written letter that details how you solved a big problem or simply having a client write an endorsement on your LinkedIn page. One easy way to get the ball rolling is to write it for the client, have them edit/make it sparkle and send it back to you.

Social Media

You can easily turn your talent and experience into expert status with the click of a mouse. If you are social media phobic, now is the time to build the foundation, especially for LinkedIn, the fastest growing social network.

Your foundation needs to include analyzing your expertise – what industry or service areas do you have the most expertise? Once you have that down, write a quick positioning statement, such as "I work with (insert type of clients) to help them (insert types of problems you

them with) by providing them with (insert services you perform). Then create a killer profile that includes your credentials, articles published, presentations and links to your website. Don't forget to include important keywords as they will help increase your online search rankings.

Expertise to Call to Action

Make a prospect want you. In every one of the tools we've mentioned, think about how you can provide a 'call to action'.....the one thing that is going to make a prospect reach out to you. Is it a whitepaper offer on your website? Is it an email campaign with a complimentary review of a prospect's tax returns from last year? Or is it simply offering to make a special introduction for a client to a resource that you know will help them? What can you do to engage, educate and have them coming back for more?

Don't Procrastinate... Start today

As a service professional, you are balancing current client needs, firm commitments, and your networks, and you're probably thinking that there is absolutely NO WAY that you can get anything else into your already jammed packed schedule today.

Unfortunately, time does not fall into your lap, you must create it. Think about those deleting the time wasters on your calendar, or perhaps an item or two that you can delegate to others. Block time on your calendar once a week. Then close your door and focus completely. You would be amazed what you can accomplish in one hour a week or 52 hours a year.

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AccelerAction is dedicated solely to helping professional service firms fuel their marketing, branding and lead development efforts. We work with accounting and law firms as well as consultants, private investment firms, banks, financial advisors, human resources firms – any business-to-business service organization that needs to accelerate growth through personal relationships.

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