

5 Steps for Building Trust and Becoming the Go-to in Your Field



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Any entrepreneur knows that a critical aspect of growing one's business and elevating your brand is to step up as a thought leader in your field. For instance, we've all marveled at the CEO who shares words of wisdom on LinkedIn or the icon names behind our favorite newsletters and podcasts. But when it comes time to build your credibility and find your audience, it may seem impossible to know where to start. Social media is crowded these days – how does anyone stand out from the crowd?

Luckily, there *are* ways to ensure your voice is heard and stands out from the fray. Becoming a thought leader takes dedication and hard work, but it can be done with the right

strategy and an honest approach. Read on for five crucial tips on becoming a go-to voice in your field.

Related: 5 Tips for Using LinkedIn to Become a Bonafide Thought Leader

Step 1: Develop your own voice

Before beginning any other aspect of becoming a thought leader, it's crucial to define your own voice. Audiences these days are hyper-aware of inauthenticity and quickly pick up on false optimism or incorrect knowledge. Whether you're speaking on past failures, insecurities, or weaknesses, remember to stay true to yourself and your expertise when sharing your insights.

Similarly, the only way you can really stand out from the crowd is by being yourself! From your sense of humor to your creative vision, leaning into your unique point of view will differentiate you from others and develop engaged, loyal followers. Don't try to emulate others you already see in the field. Originality always wins out.

Related: How to Showcase Your Expertise and Become a Thought Leader

Step 2: Use each platform thoughtfully

Once you know your point of view, figure out how to leverage your learnings and insights across the different social platforms. Today's vast array of social platforms have very different uses and audiences, so you'll want to share your thoughts in a variety of ways across each while remaining true to your overall message.

For instance, LinkedIn is primarily text-based, with room for

occasional video and image posts. It's also a platform designed to engage and encourage others, so lean into the community aspect.

Meanwhile, video-first platforms like TikTok and Instagram have entirely different best practices; you may want to lean into trending sounds and memes or share stories from your POV in short clips. And if you post on Twitter, you'll want to encapsulate your message in brief, text-only posts. Each platform offers significant benefits when used correctly, so research (and use) them before posting, and don't try a one-size fits all strategy.

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Step 3: Listen to others

The phrase "thought leader" makes it seem like you'll always be the one leading the conversation, but remember that you need to listen to others, too! An essential part of remaining an authority in your field is constantly seeking knowledge and growing. From reading books and articles to respecting diverse voices, make room in your life to expand your mind so that you can remain at the top of your game.

Another essential element of listening is never to pretend to hold authority or knowledge when you don't have it. If a subject isn't in your wheelhouse, that's okay! Your audience will respect you more if you can acknowledge your information gaps, especially if you can take constructive criticism whenever thrown your way.

Related: 50 Strategies for Becoming a Thought Leader in Your Field

Step 4: Analyze what's working

When building your audience and brand, you'll want to take a step back regularly and see what resonates with people. Are certain parts of your message getting positive feedback more than others? Are there specific questions that crop up again and again?

Be sure to incorporate any statistics and audience feedback into your posting schedule so you're not simply speaking into a void. Your audience wants to feel that they're having a two-way discussion, so distilling your message to what they want to learn is key to an engaged, long-term audience relationship.

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Step 5: Get out into the real world

While social media, blogs and podcasts are crucial for thought leadership in today's modern age, don't forget to get out from behind your computer screen from time to time. Real-life conversations can significantly benefit your thought leadership growth and demonstrate to online audiences that you genuinely care about your industry.

Attend conferences and panels in your field and take the opportunity to network with others. Even simple coffee dates are a great way to regularly make time for real-life discussions. While it may seem easy to develop your brand online, much of being an entrepreneur still rely on a face-to-face conversation – so don't forget to carve out time to make those real-life connections.

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