6 Positive Changes That Come When You Start Showing Authenticity in Your Business

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You've heard about authenticity so much that you probably think of it as a buzzword. It shouldn't be. A whopping 88 percent of consumers consider it important when deciding what brands to support.

And by authenticity, I mean an actual alignment between your internal sense of self and the way you express it or show it to your audience. For example, here's what being authentic can look like in your business:

- Ensuring your values aren't just a website section: your audience should feel them whenever they interact with you
- Engaging with your community and making the most of user-generated content
- Using brand photography that captures your personality rather than staged corporate-looking pictures
- Being self-aware and self-reflective as a leader

Sadly, lots of brands and entrepreneurs preach authenticity, but not many embrace it. Not fully, at least. After all, it's way more comfortable to hide behind a persona and mimic what our competitors are doing.

So I can't blame you if you keep telling yourself that you're going to be more authentic but are too scared to try.

However, while it might take some time to get used to it, I

promise: The benefits are worth it!

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1. You'll attract an audience who gets you and share your values

Why do so many entrepreneurs avoid showing up authentically? From my experience, it's mainly because they're afraid they'll appeal to fewer people. In reality, by hiding who you are in the hope of being liked by more, you miss out on those who would obsess over you!

I'm the living proof of this. When starting as a wedding photographer, I went with a traditional-sounding name and a traditional white and gray palette. It couldn't have been further away from my personality. I just did what I thought my audience wanted and surprise, I ended up attracting…the most traditional brides.

After switching to personal brand photography for female business leaders and showing up authentically, I started attracting clients who embraced bright colors and quirkiness just like me. Clients who are good-humored, creative and fun to work with.

If you're a service provider, collaborating with your kind of people will improve every single working day. For product-based businesses, it'll translate into an army of faithful self-proclaimed brand ambassadors, especially on social media.

2. You'll cut through all the white noise

Marketing copy filled with buzzwords, stuffy headshots, the same blog posts your competitors are writing…looking and

sounding like everyone else in our industry makes us feel safe. But why should our audience choose us over the rest?

When you start showing up authentically, on the contrary, you can grab their attention. Dare to make your B2B website less boring, impress your audience with color-popping pictures, write articles that bring something new to your industry and so on.

3. You'll build trust more easily

Put yourself in your dream audience's shoes. You spot sustainability in an "our values" section and then find lots of single-use plastic in the actual products. You read that a company is meant to be a fun family but all its pictures involve uncomfortable employees in rigid postures.

Hard to trust them, isn't it? The problem with pretend authenticity is that customers can see straight through it, especially Gen Z.

When your marketing actually confirms your statements, it'll be easier for your audience to trust you.

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4. You'll make genuine connections and inspire others

Authenticity can be downright terrifying at first! It makes us feel vulnerable and exposed. Perhaps that's why you're still holding on to that impeccable business persona that always looks immaculate and never makes mistakes.

But guess what? People buy from people, as in flawed, real-life humans! When you start showing yourself for who you are, you'll make more meaningful connections. Your authenticity can even inspire others (employees, clients, followers…you name

them) to do the same.

For example, many businesswomen keep delaying their shoots because they feel incredibly self-conscious about being photographed. Well, I'm not the most confident person either nor am I a perfect size. Rather than hiding, however, I've kept showing up with bold pictures and behind-the-scenes videos.

This has encouraged more and more businesswomen to give it a go as well after accepting what society wants them to see as flaws. That's when the most authentic brand photos happen!

5. You'll make your business work for you, not the other way around

Lacking authenticity often leads to embracing other people's processes or strategies just because that's how things work.

For instance, some solopreneurs feel pressured to refer to themselves as we to pretend they're a company. At the same time, some others are charging more by pivoting on the fact that there's only one of them.

Some photographers might be embarrassed to say they work from their own house. I love making my clients feel comfortable right from the start thanks to my welcoming home studio.

But you can't make your business work for your unique situation if you keep forcing yourself to copy what others are doing.

6. It'll finally feel right

Having a persona or following other people's definition of success might feel safe. But be honest: deep down, does it also feel good? For me, it doesn't. I find that, when I'm not true to myself, my business feels like playing pretend.

You started your business because you wanted to create a better life. How can you do that if you're forcing yourself into a mold that doesn't match your actual shapes?

Don't get me wrong. Initially, showing up authentically can feel scary and uncomfortable. When you've been doing it for a while, however, it'll start to feel natural and right.

You'll wake up every morning knowing you've built a business that's true to your actual ethos and attracts like-minded individuals. Isn't that worth a little initial discomfort?

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