A 5-Step Approach to Commanding More Attention in a Competitive Industry

Here’s how to position yourself and your business.

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There is only so much attention to go around in any industry, so positioning both your personal brand and company correctly is extremely important if you want a piece of the action. It becomes even more difficult in ultra-competitive industries like real estate and online marketing.

So, how do you break through all of the noise and be seen and heard in a competitive industry? Many experts simply say you should become a thought leader or an influencer, but you can’t just label yourself a thought leader. That isn’t how it works. Your actions make your audience view you as a thought leader or influencer.

When I started my company, I spent a lot of time developing my personal brand in order to stand out. The online marketing industry was (and still is) very competitive, so I needed to do things that put me in front of my audience in a non-promotional way. After my last pivot, I’m no longer after the same audience, but that doesn’t mean I’ve abandoned personal branding as part of my growth strategy.

Actually, it’s a topic I’m constantly discussing among my network. Luis Iglesias is the founder and principal broker of Iglesias Realty Group, a full-service boutique real estate

agency in Coral Gables, FL – right down the street from me. He's been in the game for a long time and has an impressive list of clients in the luxury market. I am constantly digging into his strategies of getting in front of those clients. While we share different audiences, the strategies and game plan remain very similar, which is why constantly networking and talking with other entrepreneurs proves to be so beneficial for your own personal growth.

Miami's real estate market is very competitive. Back in 2016 alone, 4,200 new agents were licensed within a 6-month period. Just to help pain the picture a little, take this into consideration:

What does this mean?

There are far more active real estate agents than deals closing, with an almost never-ending supply of new inventory coming to market. Those that don't figure out personal branding will fail and those that master it have unlimited potential directly in front of them. To command attention, regardless of how competitive your industry is, here is a five-step process you need to be following.

1. Focus on delivering real value.

Too many people focus on trying to sell right away. Rather than telling someone you are the best, provide them with value and let them come to that conclusion on their own. Figure out what kind of insight and information you can provide that nobody else is, and leverage that to gain trust and respect.

There is no cookie-cutter system for delivering value, and for your audience to determine whether or not it's actual value or just adding to the fluff and noise currently available.

Iglesias realized he needed to be available around the clock because his celebrity clients don't have traditional

schedules. Late-night phone calls, after-hours showings, etc. – these are all things his audience considered to be highly valuable.

When I started my company there was a lot of content published to make online marketing appear to be overwhelming – these companies felt that if they used industry jargon and complex explanations, they would attract business. I used the completely opposite approach, creating downloadable content assets that broke everything down in easy to digest information, which my audience found valuable, and that was responsible for a large percentage of my lead generation.

2. Open up and tell your personal story.

The more of your story that you put out there, the more your audience will be able to relate to. A lot of entrepreneurs only put out information they think will make their target audience connect with them, failing to understand that it's their personal experiences and story that will draw attention.

Everyone has a story, and the way to cut through the crowd in a competitive industry is to tell yours. For me, it was why I decided to start my online marketing agency in the first place. I tried other business ventures in the past and was sick of being burned by email marketing companies, SEO firms and pay-per-click management companies.

I decided to do all of the marketing myself. Over time, I realized that the only part of my businesses that I enjoyed was the marketing – so I launched my own agency. Business owners connected with my story because they, too, were sick of the runaround from service providers. Even the latest pivot my company made has a story, which will be told through a new, interactive element currently being built as part of our new website design launch.

Iglesias also used his story to stand out in one of the most competitive real estate markets. Beginning his real estate career as a property appraiser and mortgage broker more than 15 years ago, it’s his professional experience in all aspects of the transaction that has allowed him to grow a full-service firm.

While most agents educate and inform about the buying process in a limited capacity, Iglesias is able to explain the entire process – from personal experience – a value-add not all firms or agents can offer.

3. Write often, but don’t start with a business blog.

If you have knowledge, experience and insight to share, then put it out there for your target audience to see. Content marketing works well, but only if you get eyeballs on your writing, and a company blog usually isn’t the best place to start due to limited traffic in the beginning.

You are better off finding established publications to guest blog on or using a platform like LinkedIn or Medium to publish on, as they have a larger user base constantly looking for new content to engage with.

In the beginning, I started writing for many hyper-focused blogs in the search engine optimization, email marketing and pay-per-click advertising space. From there I moved onto more general business publications.

However, if you prefer to keep all of your content on a website that you fully own and control, there are options. You can run paid ads on Facebook to push traffic to a new blog or you can syndicate your posts through paid channels like Outbrain or Taboola. Even if you have money to spend, I would highly suggest honing your writing skills on existing

platforms and outlets first.

4. Create content on a regular basis on the platforms your audience is most active.

The best content marketers have one thing in common: consistency.

Everyone wants to go viral and reap the instant reward, but in reality, it's a pipe dream. Even if you do go viral once, then what? What is the next play?

It doesn't matter what form of content you commit to, just do it consistently. Iglesias understands that the luxury real estate audience is very visual, which is why he went all-in on Instagram. Consistently posting beautiful images of Miami luxury real estate keeps his audience engaged and his company and himself on their mind, which proves to be effective when it comes time for them to inquire about a new property.

Also, don't be afraid to test new formats of content. Just because something works (or doesn't) for one person or company, doesn't mean you will experience the same results. Blog content has been my go-to for years, but I've recently started to experiment with more video content and now have a vlog series about to roll out, complimenting the new company pivot.

5. Understand it's not an overnight process.

Positioning yourself as a thought leader takes time and full commitment. There are no shortcuts or overnight successes. If you aren't prepared to put in the work, you are going to be highly disappointed.

Many people see someone in a position of authority or influence and assume he or she arrived there overnight. They fail to see the years of work, failures and struggles that led to that point. This is another reason why telling your story is so important – it makes you more human and easier to relate to.

For Iglesias, it’s been a 15-year journey in the real estate industry. For me, it’s been multiple business attempts before I found what I loved, followed by several pivots to arrive at where I am today.

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