

Becoming An Overnight Expert Through IM

WHY BEING AN EXPERT CAN HELP YOUR IM SALES

Internet marketing can be a whole lot different than retail sales. For one, when people shop in a brick-and-mortar store, they are greeted by a sales person and sometimes shake their hands. It may seem a trivial thing, but people tend to trust someone who they have a personal relationship with more than an anonymous sales page on the Internet. However, there is a way to establish a relationship with the visitors to your website in a way that impresses upon them that you also are trustworthy: By presenting yourself as an expert in your field.

There are a number of reasons why people tend to trust experts more than just someone off the street. They are seen to have an air of authority over other people. They tend to be viewed as being more knowledgeable than other people. The credentials that they have also shows up as a rubber stamp from other organizations that give that person the perception of having a higher standard of ethics to uphold. Whatever the reason, you can use the same psychological triggers to build websites and sales pages that get your visitors to instantly trust you and to want to do business with you. That's the power of being an expert.

If you think it is not possible to be an expert without having gone to a graduate program, written a book, or done something extremely remarkable with your life to prove your expertise, you are wrong! The Internet has made it extremely easy for you to show your stuff without having to spend tons of money getting someone else to certify that you are an expert. In this short report, you are going to learn the secrets of building an online presence that will establish your credibility and expertise in ways that cost very little money. Once you have that strong presence, you will find that people will flock to you for advice on how to solve their problems if it relates to your niche, and this will be a natural and organic way to generate customer leads and repeat sales without having to give the hard sell.

We're going to provide you with numerous methods to build your online expert profile in such a way that you can generate a web of good publicity for you and your products. If you find that one method is too time intensive or not working for your niche, you can try another. There's no set formula that you have to use. As long as you try several different strategies to see which work best with your audience, you will be well on the road to generating an online presence that awes and delights your visitors. That popularity will naturally rub off on your company and be the source of great referrals and product sales.

THE ABOUT US PAGE

One of the easiest things to do to get yourself recognized as an expert is also the most commonly missed element of a website. It's the "About Us" page. Are you telling your customers who you are and why they should buy from you? If not, don't assume they are going to figure it out on their own. A good "About Us" page can be a way to introduce yourself and your company in a way that frames your Internet presence in the way you want to be known. If you don't write up your own "About Us" page, odds are that someone will do a review on you and people will Google it and get their information from someone else. To make sure that doesn't happen, include a detailed "About Us" page and let people know that you are an expert in your field and totally trustworthy.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD ABOUT US PAGE

- **You And Your Partners**

Give the names of you and your business partners. Let the visitor become acquainted with who you are and your role in the company.

- **Your Expertise**

Don't be coy about letting your audience know what your passion and expertise happens to be, as well as that of your compatriots. The more someone can relate to those interests, the more they will feel as if they are getting to know you.

- **Short Bios**

Back up any claims as an expert by giving a short biography for the principal players. Using personal anecdotes and storytelling can be a great way to bring the reader into your lives and to help them to identify with the members of your team.

- **Books Written**

Has anyone on your team authored articles or books that you can display as part of your credentials? If so, be sure to mention that in the biography related to that person as being an author of that particular group.

- **Awards Received**

Nothing impresses people more than knowing you or your business has received recognition from other sources. It doesn't even matter if it's an Internet award or an award from some prestigious organization, be sure to list it.

- **Good Press**

Has someone else mentioned you favorably in their blogs or online articles? Be sure to link to it in the About Us page. Also, if you get a

recommendation in the mainstream media, make sure to add a reference to where others can look up what others are saying about you. This can be a very good way to generate the impression of recognized expertise, but only if you toot your own horn!

GET PUBLISHED

One of the most influential ways to make people decide that you are truly an expert is to get yourself published. Obviously, no one wants to spend years writing a book and then trying to market it just to make a strong favorable impression on others. At some point, the amount of time and money that would take grossly exceeds the benefits of proving you are an expert. There are other ways to do this, though, by taking advantage of the many new online content areas on the Internet. There are also many self-publishing companies that make it easy to become an expert these days. Let's go over a few different ways you can get yourself published, while reducing the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish your goal.

SHORT ARTICLES, GUEST POSTS, BLOGS

The Internet is hungry for original content. If you are a good writer, you can easily get yourself published just by writing a few articles and submitting them to any number of article directories out there. EzineArticles.com is one article directory that many new people join to help them get recognized as experts. They have a large audience and you can see how effective your articles are by the number of reads you are getting. Just be sure to write on the subject you are promoting as your expertise. Make the articles informative, entertaining, and be sure to add a link to your website in the resource box to show where others can find out more about you and your business.

If you have networked with people knowledgeable in the niche you want to market, they can make a perfect venue to start creating guest posts on any number of sites. You supply the content and they give you a byline. This automatically gives you credibility with their audience and promotes you as someone worth listening to.

You can also start your own blog and write daily posts in an informal and conversational style. This counts as "online publishing." As the number of people reading and commenting on your blog increases, you automatically become known as the expert on that subject.

GET GHOST WRITERS

What if you're not a great writer, but want to get some articles or even an ebook written with your name on it? Luckily, you can pay someone to do it for you. Freelance writers are ready and waiting to take your ideas and make them a reality, for a fee. You can look at Elance.com or Guru.com to find people who will write an ebook you will be proud to put your name on. This frees you up from spending massive amounts of time trying to do something you may not be good at in the first place and still get to look like an author.

GET THEM TO TESTIFY!

Testimonials on your website, particularly when they relate to a specific product or service, can be a very effective way of imprinting on the reader's mind that you are an expert. If other people are listening to you and buying your products, then it shows that others trust you. If, in addition, they are also taking the time to give a testimonial, it can show that you are providing service beyond the average Internet marketer. It enhances your online reputation and is a subtle, yet very powerful, psychological trigger that spurs sales.

A SENSE OF BELONGING

The trigger this invokes is a sense of belonging. Who doesn't want to be a part of the "in crowd," the people in the know? If everyone on the Internet is saying good things about you and your products, why aren't they buying them? It's a subtle form of peer pressure that can trigger an immediate response to take you up on your offer because everyone else is doing so too.

This can be combined with a need for status by putting up testimonials from people who are very popular or well-known. This can include an endorsement from a celebrity, if you can get one, or just endorsements from people who are successful in their field and can prove it. If you can get these types of testimonials and you are selling high-priced products or services, it can make a huge difference in whether people are willing to open their pocketbooks or not. If they know that someone who has already built up a large profile as an expert in a similar field and has achieved success is endorsing your products, it makes you look like an up-and-coming expert too.

PLACEMENT IS IMPORTANT

Putting a testimonial on a sales page is not a bad idea. Testimonials should be on your website in areas that make the most impact. This is typically associated with a sales page or promotional offer, not all by itself. If a person is visiting a sales page and trying to make up his/her mind on whether to purchase that particular product or service, knowing that someone else trusted you enough to make the purchase and recommend you, is a sure-fire way to make a positive impact on the psyche of the reader.

SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS

Try to put in testimonials that directly show how that product or service solved the customer's problems. That's a way of listing your benefits in a format that is less commercial and more sociable. The more you put yourself in the customer's shoes, the better the testimonial will be.

SOCIAL NETWORK INTO FAME

One of the easiest and most overlooked ways for people to gain instant fame as an expert is via social networking. At first, this may seem like a huge waste of time, but it has a snowball effect that can quickly build up into avalanche proportions if it's done correctly. The results are not instantaneous, but well worth the additional effort of networking with people in this newest arena of Internet marketing forums. Here are some quick ways to build fame in record time using social networking tools like Twitter.com, Facebook.com, or MySpace.com.

TARGET YOUR PROFILES

The first thing you have to do when you get onto Facebook or MySpace is to build a profile. On Twitter, you won't have that ability, but you will have a space to put one website link. That's where you will want to link to your About Us page, as described previously. For the other sites, you are going to want to carefully build a profile that reflects the interests and experiences that help define you as an expert in a particular niche.

That means that if you want to be recognized as an expert on pets, your profile should list many different facets of how you show that passion for pets. It's not as hard as it seems since you get to pick your favorite books and movies, as well as join any number of groups that you want. There are even applications that can relate to a particular niche that will be useful to add to your profile. When you invite someone to be your friend, they will read your profile, which will let them know that you are

interested in this niche and that you want to network with people in this niche.

ADD YOUR FRIENDS

While it's really not about the number of friends you have on a social networking site that defines your quality, it tends to lend to the impression that you are popular and in demand, like any expert would be. Just remember to try to build your list with people who are interested in your niche to keep it growing as a valuable marketing list that generates interest and that helps other people to network too.

When you first log in, you will have no friends. Remember those sad people in school with no friends? They were in a Catch-22. You can't get friends until you have friends, because people automatically think you're a loser if you have no friends. The same is true online on social networking sites. It doesn't matter, at first, who you get to be your friend, as long as you get some people to connect with you. Otherwise, you're going to be stuck in that Catch-22 for a while as you beg people who don't know you to become your friends.

The easier path is to get friends you already know offline to join you online. This is done by way of your electronic email addresses. There are facilities to invite your address book to join, if you want to, or you can pick one at a time. It may come as a surprise, but many of your colleagues may already be on these social networking sites as a way for them to network too. They will welcome you as a friend and you can get the ball rolling in the right direction.

On Facebook, you can even look up past school buddies to get them to join you online. It's a great way to reestablish lost ties and form new ones. Catching up with people you haven't seen can be really heart-warming. You can also get your family to connect with you online to start the base of friends you need to attract others into your profile.

The next way to increase your list and get some people to join you on these sites is to look at the friends of your friends. Do you see some people there that are mutual acquaintances? Be sure to ask them to befriend or connect with you too. Joining groups that have similar interests to your marketing niche is a good way to meet other people and network online. As you start to interact with more and more people, it becomes even easier to attract attention and get yourself noticed.

UPDATE YOUR STATUS FREQUENTLY

There will be an area where you can update your status. It will typically be just a short text box asking you "what are you doing?" or "what are you thinking about?" At any rate, you will want to update that status at least once a day to keep people involved in what's going on in your life. This

area is going to help you generate more interest for your profile and start to position you as an expert on the social networking site.

Use the status update to post links to places that are talking about you positively, any articles that you post, any offers that you want to promote. Also, add humorous quotes and take the time to connect with your friends or followers and provide value to people. If you don't provide value and focus only on commercially promoting yourself, you will quickly lose those friends and followers. Try to maintain a healthy balance between self-promotion and nurturing connections to keep your list robust.

TIT FOR TAT

In order to connect, you have to reach out and help others to gain the reputation of an expert who goes out of their way to contribute to the online community. Nothing speaks better of you than your own actions.

JOINING INTEREST GROUPS

Whether you are on Facebook or in a news forum, you will have the opportunity to join groups of similar interests. These groups serve several purposes. They allow people of similar interests to congregate online. They offer an area to discuss topics of relevance to the group and to share information. They let you post resources and links so that other people can learn from other people online. That's where you can step in to make yourself an expert within the group by learning how to contribute to the group in a way that creates value and community.

WHEN YOU JOIN

Introduce yourself when you first join, if that's within the guidelines. Other groups allow you to "lurk" by registering for the group without adding to the discussion until later. Whatever you decide, make sure you are following the guidelines set up for the group so that you get started on a good foot. Try not to dominate the conversation when you first start, but if you are asked to introduce yourself, put up a small blurb about who you are, why you are there, and what you hope to gain from joining the group.

COMMENT INTELLIGENTLY

Next, you are going to try to join in the conversation and comment intelligently. Don't be bashful about showing off your expertise. Whether

it's solving someone's problems, answering a question, or directing someone to an interesting resource or tool, you can show others that you are the person to come to when they need help. The more you contribute, the more others will recognize your expertise and will start to crosslink your answer to other posts around the Web. This gets you a lot of great, free press and will increase your reputation exponentially.

AUTOMATIC PROMOTION THROUGH SIGNATURES

Of course, if you don't have a link on each and every post going back to your website or offers, it will only be a bunch of gabbing with little returns. Rectify that situation by adding a signature that is automatically appended to any post you make in the group. Some groups won't allow you to do that as it is against their posting guidelines, so check that out first. If you're not sure, you can open a few posts and see if others are using automatic signatures. You will be able to tell because the bottom of their posts will have their names and a few links to other places on the Internet. If the group you want to join doesn't have an automatic link back to your profile (as in the case of Facebook) or allow you to post signature files, it's best not to waste your time in that group. You want to promote yourself as an expert and make sales too.

YAHOO! ANSWERS

Where's a good place to find experts? Where lots of people are asking questions! Yahoo! Answers is one such forum devoted to a community of people asking questions on a variety of topics. Anyone can join, and you can quickly develop a reputation as an expert just by choosing to answer a few questions every day.

QUALITY COUNTS

The idea behind Yahoo! Answers is that many brains are better than one. When someone posts a question, anyone with information to add to that question can post an answer. The community provides feedback on all the answers given by voting thumbs up or down on them. Thus, the good answers are usually the ones that aren't just self-promotions or short replies. They're usually well researched and come with some substantiation in the form of sources.

COMMUNITY REGULATED

The community of experts regulates the answers by voting on the answers. If you keep posting items with only links to your site that have no relevance to the question, you will be reported to the moderators for abusing the site terms. This can get your account banned. You can also get a number of thumbs down votes on the answer, which will push it to the bottom of the pile where most of the spam and poorly conceived answers land.

BEST ANSWER WINS THE GAME

The answer with the most number of favorable votes automatically climbs to the top of the pile and becomes highlighted as the "best answer." This provides instant publicity for the author of that post. If you get the best answer repeatedly, people will start to recognize your expertise in that topic and you will gain a great online reputation.

GOOGLE LOVES YAHOO! ANSWERS

Although Yahoo! Answers does have a large audience, the traffic it generates is more a factor of the way that Google loves to index this site. The best answers in particular can show up at the top of Google search results if there are keywords in the question and answer that are being searched. The audience is much larger than it appears. In addition, those answers may have disappeared from Yahoo!'s front page, but Google will continue to serve them on the top of its results page as long as the answers stay relevant to the searches.

VOLUNTEER AS AN EXPERT GUEST

Online seminars and guest interviews are a very popular type of format for online content. It can draw a great number of people to a site. In order to have a seminar with a panel of experts, those experts have to be invited and agree to be a part of the panel. Getting people involved can be the hardest part, and people who own websites or alternative news sites are always seeking to find people to interview or seminars to host. If you can provide value and are willing to share your expertise with others for free, you can contact other sites or experts and either engage in a seminar or host one yourself as the moderator.

YOUTUBE AND BLOGTV CHANNELS

The newer forms of video channels are an especially effective format for interviews. All you have to do is locate channels with a large number of viewers and see if they'd be interested in interviewing you. One way to get this done is to set up your own channels and become a part of the community first. Even if your own videos, which may be instructional, have few viewers, if they are quality videos, other people on the site will try to lend a supportive hand to one of their own. If you can create a joint venture where you are interviewing each other or promoting each other's videos, you will get a great reputation as being an expert in the particular niche you've marketed.

COMMUNITY TALK SHOWS

Similarly, there are radio shows within the community that are always looking for interesting speakers. Many of them also now have an online presence and post their shows online for their Internet viewers. Try to locate a couple of local talk shows and see if you can get yourself on there with an interesting subject or can be interviewed on some of their shows with similar topics. This has the double-effect of getting local listeners to recognize your name as an expert in the field and also as an expert online when that show is posted for the online community.

INTERVIEW YOURSELF

You can write up an interview format to give the most interesting points of who you are and why you're an expert. Get some of your online friends to post the written interview on their sites as their own work to introduce you to their audiences. You can do the same for them if they want to trade. This works very well if you have a blog and you're networking with someone else who is in a similar market niche.

TEACH WHAT YOU KNOW

The ultimate way to be known as an expert is to be a teacher of what you know. Teachers gain automatic respect and authority as experts in their fields. There are several ways to teach online; some will require credentials and others won't.

IF YOU GOT THE CREDENTIALS

Maybe you have a Master's degree or a Doctorate degree in your field; if so, then you should definitely flaunt this. These types of degrees are impressive and qualify you as an expert. Many teaching positions require a Master's degree or higher. If you've got the credentials, be sure to put those letters after your name. If you've graduated from a prestigious university, be sure to mention that too.

FOR THOSE THAT DON'T

It can be a lot harder to break into teaching without the proper credentials, but it's still not impossible. As long as you can show that you have significant experience in a particular topic, there are many online universities and classrooms that would like to have you share that expertise. Sell your skills and how you can benefit the school and attract students, even if the course is not as technical or as intellectual as another. As long as you can say you are teaching courses, you automatically achieve the aura of expert in your field.

CREATE YOUR OWN TELESEMINARS

Even if you can't get involved with some online school or teaching venue because of a lack of prior experience, don't let that stop you. You can create your own teleseminars. Just grab a web camera and start talking. Use computer graphics or PowerPoint if you want to create charts and images to splice into the teleseminar. Post it on YouTube and then invite the community there to view it and comment on it. Add the link to your website in the one URL link that is available to posters so that people know where to go to get more information.

The nice thing about creating your own teleseminars is that you have complete freedom to create the type of class or informational seminar without having to get anyone's approval. You can experiment with the media and take as long as you want to put your first teleseminar up. After you've got a great teleseminar, you can offer it for free by creating a group page and inviting people to come and watch it via your social networking sites. Request feedback and offer your links to your website and sales pages within the invitation, as well as a part of the ending visuals on the teleseminar so that people can use them to find more information on that topic. Since it is a free teleseminar, you can use it to promote some particular product or service, as long as it's not the sole purpose of the entire video. Always contribute value first and then add your links when it is appropriate. As long as you stick to the idea of providing value to your community, you will come off looking like the expert you want to be.