10 STEPS FOR BETTER CREDIBILITY

IDEA GENERATOR

NAMS
Novice to Advanced Marketing System

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Introduction

There are many ways to demonstrate credibility to your perfect client or customer – and demonstrating it authentically through a life lived in your public's eye is always better than simply talking about how great you are or trying to live up to an "image" as some type of saint. The best part about most of these strategies and techniques: They will feel natural - and that will both reassure your client or customer and increase your own level of comfort.

Create a Facebook Page

Many of your clients and customers may already "live" on Facebook. Don't make them leave their favorite social network - create a Page for your business and post as your page.

Not only will you become part of their Facebook everyday life, but you can also answer simple customer service questions instantly and in person - and that is one of the most reassuring things you can do for customers and clients.

Another advantage to adopting this strategy: Others who are not yet customers or clients will see you do this - and it will build confidence in you.

Create a FAQ Page or Section on Your Website

One of the simplest and quickest ways to demonstrate your expertise lies in providing a rock-solid FAQ section, anticipating and dealing with issues you've come across in your professional experience: Ones you've already solved for customers and clients.

If you provide an available answer before they've barely thought up the question, you will reassure your customers and clients that you do know what they need - and you are already providing it.

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Provide Your Contact Details

Prove you are a real person. Make sure all contact information can be verified. Don't use box numbers, if you can help it (people suspect frauds, when you do this): Give your clients and customers a street address.

Provide a telephone number (and Skype handle). Cater to individual contact preferences by providing more than one option.

If for some reason you really don't want to provide a telephone number, a professionally designed contact box is a reassuring alternative.

Use Strong Branding

Credibility lies in people knowing who you are, what you look and sound like, and what they can expect from you. But it all begins with easily recognizing you.

Take that one step further and allow them to instantly connect content with you just by the colors you use, the graphic styles you employ, your logo and other recognizable, repetitive elements and you are creating a brand. It doesn't matter whether you're aiming for a company brand or personal branding - humans love repetition (and elements that are repeated are easy to remember).

Be Professional

Being professional is not just about "doing things properly" or having the right credentials. It's about:

- Focusing always on your client or customer
- Paying attention to details
- Always looking for a way to take things one step further

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Also make sure you get into the habit of triple-proofing your content and website for spelling mistakes, missing words, incorrect word version (e.g., “you’re” instead of “your”) and weak sentences. Expressing yourself coherently goes a surprisingly long way in reassuring visitors to your website.

Give Yourself the Grandma/Mom Test

Look at what you’re saying, showing, and selling. Would your mother or grandmother frown in disagreement? Would they say: “Hey, that’s not really you talking?”

Would you be embarrassed if they read your story or perused your website?

Using the Grandma/Mom test is a ridiculously effective way to make sure you are always being real and authentic.

Soar with Eagles

Reputation is everything in business. When you’re just starting out online, there is sometimes a tendency to joint venture with anyone who is “already doing it”, throw yourself into marketing any old product or say “yes” to business or niche peers you don’t know well.

Be careful not to include or promote irrelevant or less-than-top-quality bonuses or products.

Be careful who you accept as a partner, or whose bonuses you allow in your offers. Be careful who you promote and associate with professionally.

It only takes one less-than-honest associate to drag your own name down into the mire. So be choosy - for the sake of your customers and clients.

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Answer Your Customers and Clients

That might seem basic, but nothing kills a budding relationship faster than silence. Josephine Schmoe buys your eBook and likes it. You have convinced her you're the top-of-the-trees expert on paper quilling, her obsessive hobby (and yours). She's enjoying the posts on your Facebook Page, and impulsively she asks you a question.

It's a serious question: Perhaps she wants to know how to find out more about your next workshop; or she wants to know which type of paper is best for quilling small flowers.

If you're not there daily on your Facebook Page, you won't see that question and as a result you won't answer it.

Or maybe you're worried that if you answer one question for her, she'll ask more (and so will everyone else).

That's skating perilously close to thinking you're too good, too busy or too important to answer questions, by the way. When you consider that answering questions authoritatively and helpfully is the best and simplest way to demonstrate that you're the real deal, it becomes inexplicable why any business owner would ignore the questions: Yet that's what about ninety per cent of all businesses that have a Facebook page do.

Providing contact options you can handle easily - and answering questions or commenting on posts and letters - is one of the best ways to build up not just trust, but loyalty too.

Use Targeted Press Releases

Sending press releases out to all and sundry is what amateurs do. Paying to position your press releases in major news services is how to instantly build authority while still spreading the news.

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For example, what do you think carries more weight? An appearance on Oprah or a paragraph at the back of an eZine?

While the latter can bring in good sales, investing cash in mainstream media through agencies such as PR Newswire can garner your global reach - and still hook into your target audience.

Gather Recommendations from Industry Peers and Fellow Experts

While it's great that customers and clients happily contribute their success stories or testimonials, there is nothing like having an already-established industry expert (especially at celebrity level) endorse you.

Offering a joint venture project that will directly benefit and thrill their own audience is a great way to fast-track getting to know an industry expert.

Just make sure their endorsement is relevant to your audience: It will detract if no one knows who your celebrity is because she operates in a field your demographics doesn't bother with.

Give Samples

It doesn't matter whether these are free samples or "lite" versions of your product: Samples are a great way to whet your ideal customer's appetite - and make her want more.

Just make sure any sample you provide is stand-alone complete. It should perform one task or function, to show people how it can help them on many tasks or functions. (In other words, it should be a microcosm of your "world" - not just an incomplete piece.)

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To put it in perspective, think “food”. You might serve up a tray of fantastic hors d'oeuvres to demonstrate your gourmet cooking skills. Select any single hors d’oeuvre, and it is a melt-in-the-mouth taste of perfection. It is complete.

But give your potential patrons a mouthful of the carrots from your gourmet dinner and they won’t really have a sense of the complete dinner.

Your sample should leave your customer saying: “Oh my goodness! If that bacon-wrapped water chestnut was that good, I’d love to try her entrées!” Likewise, your simple free template should leave potential clients saying: “Wow, what a great template! I’m going to buy her twenty-pack deal.”

Invest in Quality

Make sure that every step of your process and every part of your business radiates professionalism and quality.

Proof-reading your content is just one very small part of that. If you hire a ghostwriter, hire one with experience: One who knows how to write with your unique voice and who delivers original, top-notch content.

If you hire a graphic designer, make sure her style syncs with your branding and that she herself has the reputation and recommendations to reassure you.

If you buy PLR, buy quality PLR - and spend the extra time you need to customize it and make it your own.

You can bring quality to every part of your business; from the people you hire to the products you create.

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When Looking for Expert Connections, Dig Into Your Past

Take inventory. Who do you know in your field? Don't just stick with the obvious answers, such as peers you know now. Think back to that dressage coach you had as a teenager or the farrier who came to your local fare and demonstrated how to cold-shoe a horse.

Phone or write to them and reference that specific past event. Ask them to review your new product or be a guest on your podcast.

Many people are genuinely flattered that you remember something they put care and time into so clearly and are only too pleased to support you.

Write a Book

One of the best ways to build your credibility with any audience or demographic is to be a published author.

Once upon a time, that was a privilege reserved for a rarified few, but nowadays, you can self-publish a book in a week or two if (a) you have something to say (b) you use a platform such as Amazon.com.

And what is more, there is now no longer a stigma on "vanity publishing". Computers have allowed individual authors access to sophisticated tools and apps to help produce perfection.

The key, of course, lies in making sure you do just that: Produce a top-quality, professional manuscript, correctly formatted and thoroughly proofed.

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Solicit Reviews

If you have created a physical product, tutorial, or eBook, don't just wait for reviews to fall in your lap: Go out there and solicit them.

On platforms and marketplaces such as Amazon, search for top reviewers in your field. Write directly to these reviewers, if they have included a link in their profiles, and offer a review copy. (Just make sure you do it in a way that violates no rules.)

Join KDP Select and take advantage of your five "free" days - periods you can set yourself, totaling five days, where you offer your book for free. Select these periods; then announce your book and promote it vigorously.

And remember to *ask* for the review!

Show Photos of Your Business on Your Website

This especially applies if you have a physical building, you operate out of locally. Showing photos of what your store looks like, inside, and out, helps people get to know you, before they ever visit. They "recognize" your store by sight; and as a result, feel comfortable with it.

If you have an online business, this is often a relevant strategy too. If you bred dogs, for example, showing your beautifully clean and comfortable kennels and happy dogs would reassure people that yours was no "puppy mill".

Ditto if you make bread: Showing photos of your three bakers, each wearing identical coveralls with their hair covered by nets, kneading dough on spotlessly clean surfaces, would help assure your customers of product quality.

Use photos as "proof" - and be creative. Put yourself in your customer's shoes and ask yourself what photos you'd like to see if you were your customer.

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Introduce Your Team

Lots of businesses do this. You see a row of headshots and brief bio blurbs; usually loaded with past experience references and credentials.

You can use formal profile shots or - if your business is informal enough - use shots that really showcase each team member's personality. Keep it real - make the photos show something about their personalities, values, passions, or lifestyle: For example, it may not be pretty to show a magazine editor as owl-eyed over twelve empty cups of espresso, but it does "tell a story" About a dedicated (if sleep-deprived) professional. (Just make sure the "message" is not only true but connects with your visitor - and honestly represents your business.

Do try, however, to keep some element of consistency to these unique portraits: Have them taken at the same time by the same photographer; perhaps with a distinctive background or lighting.

Where you can really diverge from your competitors, however, is in your bio blurbs. What you should be focusing on is not your team members' credentials as much as **how each team member is specifically going to help the reader**. (E.g., "This is Karen. She spent five years at Disney, but at Heaven Lee Designs, she will be the person who helps you choose your fabric swatches. You can reach her at…")

Network

One of the best ways to build your reputation is to meet people in person. That goes for:

- Industry peers
- Clients
- Customers
- Suppliers
- Media representatives

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Run local workshops. Join professional organizations and consistently attend their events. Talk to people there. Be interested in them.

Go to conferences and conventions.

Attend mastermind retreats and workshops.

And make sure that fits in, of course, with your budget; with where you are now in your business - and in your plans and business focus.

Be Positive

You'd be amazed at how many online entrepreneurs shoot themselves in the foot - after spending months and years working on building a professional presence - but grousing and complaining in social networks.

How you communicate leaves a lasting impression - no matter how strongly your fan or follower might be entertained by what you say (or sympathetic to your pain).

Always be positive. This doesn't mean not acknowledging bad conditions; it means coming up with solutions for those bad conditions or showing people how you handle inconvenience with grace and humor.

Dare to Share

One great way to get people promoting you, talking about you and recommending you: Provide valuable information they can easily use - right now. Don't make them pay for every tip. Share your best ones on your website, or in answers to questions on forums or social media.

Be helpful and stop worrying about "giving too much away". When people see how valuable your help is, they'll soon be looking to see what other services or products you have - and they'll be only too happy to pay.

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Seek Feedback

We only have one viewpoint, when all is said and done: Our own. We look out of our unique pair of eyes, and we see things from the spot we're standing in.

Making sure you have at least one other pair of "eyes" for your business can help alert you to your blind spots. What you perceive as reassuring may put off your intended client - and all because you took something for granted.

For example, there is the famous example of a financial coach who released a video talking about financial freedom and creating abundance - totally unaware that the shadow of bars on her window was fall all over her face and torso. Not only was this distracting, but on a subliminal level, the "bars" imagery psychologically contradicted everything she was saying.

If she had run the video by a trusted virtual assistant, or if she had paid a trained video editor, she might have been alerted to that weird little problem.

Paying professionals for feedback or calling in favors from industry friends is a great strategy, before releasing a new website design or a new video.

Conclusion:

Remember: You don't have to do backflips to establish credibility. Just be **professional, authentic,** and **customer/client focused.**

Keep it real, put in the time, hire the right people - and your good reputation will grow in leaps and bounds.

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