

How To Position Your Personal Brand as an Expert in Your Field



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Karl Smith

How to Position Your Personal Brand as an Expert in Your field

"Don't wait. The time will never be just right." - Napoleon Hill

**In today's world, positioning is everything.
A handful of experts dominate, out-consult, out-sell
and out-influence everyone else.**

“Let's face it- no one is more passionate about your work than you. No one else knows the depth of your experience and expertise. And no one can elaborate on your unique skills as convincingly as you can. By delegating promotion of your personal brand to others, you're taking away your best opportunity to demonstrate your value”.

Karl Smith

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“Hi Karl... When I was in Cape Town I met a guy that was renting and raving about how powerful your networking talk/course was...Do you still run these courses/talks? Thanks”. - Thembelani Vanqa, Auditor-General of South Africa

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1. FOREWORD: THE BIG PICTURE

Do you ever wonder how others become the go-to resource in their field? How do they get an ever-flowing source of leads and charge high prices? Wouldn't you like to know how to get there yourself?

From building a personal brand to positioning your personal brand as an expert, this is a guide to take with you to the front lines of today's business battles to get more leads, referrals and influence when you network and build profitable business relationships.

Your ability to differentiate your brand on a consistent basis is a delicate balance of both art and science. Heading due north in your dinghy without a compass will certainly play games with your psyche. Bertha Calloway said it best, "We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Wake up, Dress up and Show up. Every day is the most important day of your week. Stay focused on building your brand continuously (what makes you different), and your network. In this ebook, we are going to show you how to position your personal brand as an expert without belabouring the subject of personal branding.

During the past few years, I've learned from my own experience, from the experience of other experts, and I've taken my share of lumps and learned the hard way too.

There are some simple solutions I've discovered to the mistakes that well-intentioned business people make every day. Mistakes that cost you time, clients and income. And I'm here to help you bypass those bumps and pitfalls I ran into along the way.

From the author of the classics "Beyond The Business Handshake: Dare To Build High-Trust Business Relationships", "Networking Etiquette 101" and "Secrets To Getting Referrals" comes another book filled with lessons learned from real-life stories in the current business environment. Designed for the busy executive and entrepreneur, this book explores how you can stand out from the rest of the crowd.

It is by no means easy but nothing great ever is. Stay focused on creating an authentic experience and you too can differentiate yourself amongst all the other poor souls waiting for their phones to ring.

To your success,

Karl Smith

2. DEDICATION

We must all start somewhere when we have an idea or concept and no matter how good that idea or concept is...we need people to give us a chance. A few years ago, I designed my networking course but I needed an audience. I sat for days and nights to capture email addresses - this was long before the stringent regulation of personal details – and I finally held my first public workshop in November that year with twenty five delegates in Cape Town, South Africa.

This eBook is dedicated to the “Awies” who attended my first public workshop entitled “Leverage The Power of Business Networking for Professional and Personal Success” and the “Marijkes” who became my first coaching clients.

Awie De Swart, an executive at Simeka Consultants and Actuaries, was among my first audience who later become a raving fan of my passion. Awie would later tell his staff, as he introduced me for in-company training, that the “networking course” he had attended had changed his view of “networking and business relationship building”.

Marijke Frijters was one of my first one-on-one coaching clients who needed to network to position her as an outsourced interim human resources executive to help companies with change and strategic human resource management. Marijke hailed from the Netherlands and she was committed to enter this highly competitive field in South Africa. We worked on her networking plan and she made it!

"The person with a fixed goal, a clear picture of his desire, or an ideal always before him, causes it, through repetition, to be buried deeply in his subconscious mind and is thus enabled, thanks to its generative and sustaining power, to realize his goal in a minimum of time and with a minimum of physical effort. Just pursue the thought unceasingly. Step by step you will achieve realization, for all your faculties and powers become directed to that end."

Claude M. Bristol

3. BE A VALUE BRAND, NOT A NAME

"If I accept you as you are, I will make you worse; however if I treat you as though you are what you are capable of becoming, I help you become that" - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

There is a lot of hype about personal branding today and with the help of social media everyone is suddenly an expert on “personal branding”. Most of the advice given is superficial tips and will not get you very far.

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When I coach my clients to network more effectively I search for words and signs to give me an indication of whether they have a clear understanding of their *personal brands*. In this part of the world you will find the financial and insurance power houses of Africa.

When you look deeper down below the hype of their products and service you will come to the conclusion that there are little differences. The same could be said about the many small entrepreneurs, freelancers and independent professionals.

One of my coaching clients in the public relations industry asked me “Karl, Why are you so hard on me?” when I asked Ann (not her real name) the question “What message are you communicating about YOU when you network? Why should anyone do business with you ... what is it that you offer that will stand out in the minds of your audiences?”. “I am your reality check” I told her “I want you to think what makes you different from your competitors!” I always realize that it’s a tough question to answer. It is even tougher if you don’t know who you are beneath your titles, positions, qualifications and material possessions.

The word “personal branding” was first articulated by management guru Tom Peters in his seminal article "The Brand Called You". Tom interpreted the new global economy at the time and he foresaw great competition for limited jobs. It was in that context that he challenged employees to think about themselves beyond their titles and job descriptions. Let’s look at his challenge to employees in 1997 in his own words:

“Forget your job title. Ask yourself: What do I do that adds remarkable, measurable, distinguished, distinctive value? Forget your job description. Ask yourself: What do I do that I am most proud of? Most of all, forget about the standard rungs of progression you've climbed in your career up to now. Burn that damnable "ladder" and ask yourself: What have I accomplished that I can unabashedly brag about? If you're going to be a brand, you've got to become relentlessly focused on what you do that adds value, that you're proud of, and most important, that you can shamelessly take credit for.

“When you've done that, sit down and ask yourself one more question to define your brand: What do I want to be famous for? That's right - famous for!”

I want you to read the words above again and again until you get the message. Forget about your *personal brand* in terms of your *personal image* at this moment. You may ask: “Where do you draw the distinction between Personal Branding and Image Management?” I put image management more in the realm of public relations, advertising, attire, makeup, great photos etc. I see it as superficial, how others see or how you package your inner core.

Personal Branding is your inner core with substance. Personal image is how others perceive you, personal branding is what you want them to know about you. Since I do both, I prefer to start with personal brand work as the framework of image management.

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Thus, I ensure that my clients know their authenticity, they are not fake. When they network to grow their businesses, find a job, influence their peers and superiors, they do so confidently and with enthusiasm.

My definition of a personal brand is simple: ***“It’s what people say about you when you are not around them!”*** If you do not influence that “marketing message” then others will do it for you. Don't let others define you.

Personal branding is about differentiation. It's about using what makes you stand out from the myriad others who offer seemingly similar services. Many professionals compete for the same jobs and clients, and personal branding helps you stand head and shoulders above the competition by highlighting your unique promise of value.

As pointed out earlier, personal branding is not about building a special image for the outside world; it is about understanding what is truly unique about you - your strengths, skills, values and passions - and using that to differentiate yourself and guide your career or business decisions.

The trick of being a personal brand is that there’s a big difference between being known and being known for something, and also being able to turn that into business or to climb the corporate ladder.

Exercise

At this point take time to reflect on yourself: Fill in your answers to the following to gain clarity on the unique aspects of your Professional Brand:

1. My top three personal strengths:
2. My top three talents:
3. My core area of expertise:
4. What my target audience needs and wants:
5. The value and the experience I can deliver to meet those needs and wants:
6. What I can do better than anyone else:
7. What services I offer that differentiate me and set me ahead of my competition:

I want to caution you not to rush through this exercise. “Self-awareness” is a life-skill. Without this ability we will find it difficult to cope with life’s demands and it will undermine our abilities to build productive relationships. Your personal brand will diminish its value if it cannot build productive relationships or if it lacks enthusiasm or if it is not confident.

Self-awareness is the ultimate enabler. Without living knowledge of ourselves there would be no hope for conscious, positive change. Thanks to awareness we can take a good look at ourselves and our lives and see what is working for us and what isn't.

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My biggest criticism against the proponents of popular superficial personal branding is precisely this: they ignore the essence of teaching individuals that their personal brands will not survive in times of crisis and change without a true understanding of WHO THEY ARE and WHAT THEY STAND FOR. Pretentiousness never lasts ... the cracks will show somewhere down the line!

Let's have a look at my personal brand qualities:

“Karl is a highly dynamic, pragmatic and professional networking and business relationship building expert: helping entrepreneurs, financial advisors, professionals, managers and leaders to succeed through teaching them authentic networking and relationship building skills – and showing them how to communicate their personal brands when networking to generate referrals, find opportunities and influence others”.

When you read this statement, you will see my qualities, my audiences and the value that I have to offer. Just after I designed my networking course, I began to “see” myself travelling South Africa on various platforms in companies and conferences. I branded myself as “South Africa’s Business Networking and Referral Coach” because that’s what I saw. Everything I did to communicate and build my personal brand was geared towards this statement.

Later I would change it to “Internationally Recognized Business Networking and Business Relationship Building Expert” in my quest to ensure that everything that I serve to my audiences are of a global standard. Tell me! Do you have a clear description of that picture?

What do YOU see for yourself!

4. POSITION YOUR PERSONAL BRAND AS AN EXPERT

“When you create your personal brand it’s integral to look at what value you add to others. A great way to understanding that value add is to look at what problems you solve for others.”

Karl Smith

4.1 What’s in it for me?

Specialized knowledge or services are more highly valued than general information. I often cite one of South Africa’s most famous Chartered Accountants as an example. John (not his real name) qualified as a CA(SA) and his specialty is tax. His articles feature regularly in one of South Africa’s premier newspapers and he commands a much higher tax consulting fee than the average CA(SA) who is a compliance tax practitioner.

I had to learn costly lessons when I entered the professional public speaking arena – a highly competitive arena with closed networks. Speaker agencies only began to book me when I became known in the market as an expert in teaching others how to network. Over the past few years I have re-packaged my personal brand over and over again as I developed and deepened my work in many complementary arenas.

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Today, I look back at some of the benefits that I have reaped. To this end I can comfortably say that as a result of my expert personal brand reputation my articles have featured in many premier magazines saving me thousands of rand. I was interviewed on various radio programmes not paying a cent for advertising and it maintained the awareness of my personal brand during tough times. I have received a significant number of leads and referrals: a week ago, I received a call from a prospective client in the financial services industry with a request to register my details as a supplier.

This organization runs seminars throughout the country and she said that someone who had attended one of their seminars had told her about me.

During my full-time employment I served on boards and various committees and I would often be approached to act as a sounding board for ideas and interaction with various stakeholders. I believe in working towards my overall goals one step at a time. I have also learned to teach my prospects to trust me to help them to solve their problems one step at a time.

Let me reinforce the importance of expert personal branding with a great success story. A few years ago, I conducted a two day workshop for executives within the education environment. On the second day a female in her mid forties approached me with the words: "Karl I have to meet with you on a more personal level. I think you can help me. I am not getting younger and I want to write curriculum for academics to teach others within my field". We met a few weeks later and she shared her hopes and fears with me. One of her biggest concerns at the time was the aggressive "affirmative action policies" within the government and that it might count against her due to her skin colour.

We met and I listened to her heart ... her passion. Then I asked for her curriculum vitae. What I heard and what I saw on paper were two different things – she undersold herself. We designed a networking strategy and a personal brand plan. The latter plan required that she would publish her research, do internal workshops, learn more about her desired position and the key people who must be influenced.

One year later, I accidentally called her as she had a name similar to another client. As I had her on the line, I asked her for progress. She said with delight: "Haven't I told you? I got the position a month ago!" Clearly being an expert means that you are miles above your competitors in the job market.

Here are seven advantages of declaring expert status in your niche:

- **People call you rather than you having to call them.** Experts are sought after by clients, organizations, associations and even the media. Wouldn't it be nice to have all your calls incoming rather than outgoing?

- **You will attract more business with less effort.** As a specialist you can attract more qualified prospects and clients with much less effort than a generalist. This is a big advantage of being perceived as an expert in your in niche.
- **You are more easily referable.** When people know exactly what you do and who you do it for, they're happy to pass that information on to people they know who could use your services.
- **The media will be interested in interviewing you.** People in the media are looking for experts to interview or write about. Do something to stand out or be newsworthy so you'll get noticed. You can develop a media kit to make it easy for them to contact you.
- **You can virtually eliminate competition.** You can stand out as the top person in your field by positioning yourself as the best at what you uniquely do in your particular niche. This approach has the effect of removing any threat from competition.
- **No need to sell your services.** Rather than trying to sell yourself, you get to provide information and offer solutions to problems. Over time, people come to know, like and trust you and are then ready to hire you without you having to sell to them.
- **You can command much higher fees.** One of the biggest advantages of positioning yourself as an authority in your field is that you can charge much higher fees for your specialized knowledge than you could for more general services.

4.2 So what is an expert?

“The first is that you need to work every single day at being great at that one thing if you want to be great.” Penelope Trunk

Historically, an expert was referred to as a sage (Sophos). The individual was usually a profound thinker distinguished for wisdom and sound judgment.

I looked at how the collective has defined expert on Wikipedia, and it starts with:

“An expert is someone widely recognized as a reliable source of technique or skill whose faculty for judging or deciding rightly, justly, or wisely is accorded authority and status by their peers **or the public** in a specific well-distinguished domain”.

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It does go on to qualify that an expert has “extensive knowledge or ability **based on research, experience, or occupation** and in a particular area of study” and that the knowledge comes “by virtue of **credential, training, education, profession, publication or experience**”.

Unfortunately, many of the self-proclaimed experts out there do not have knowledge based on any of those criteria, but ‘the public’ can be easily (mis)led.

There’s a difference between being popular and being an expert. As an expert, I have invested (and continue to do so) hours in researching my area of expertise. I have published many articles over the years covering various areas in my field as well as related fields.

Expert reputation is earned by your audiences ... they bestow it upon you and you must proactively nurture it. You don’t have it until they give to you and this means that they can also take it away from you.

The lesson is simple: You can package yourself as an expert in a particular field on a brochure or on-line media but once your audience experience you they will instinctively search to see if your “personal brand promise”, i.e. the promise you make on your website or in your corporate profile, CV, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter etc adds up to their experiences. Large and medium-sized corporate organisations often market their staff as “the-go-experts” and when people experience them, they don’t live up the expectations. That’s setting people up for failure!

Someone once said, that if you read, research and write in one area for one year, then you can become an expert in many things. Today, I deem myself to be an expert in a number of related fields including authentic business networking, building high-trust business relationships, trust-based referral generation and personal success. If you search my online reputation then you will see that I write and speak in all these areas. Most importantly, my audiences approach me for help in these areas. I have earned their trust.

You don't have to be the world's leading expert, but you do need to know what you're talking about, and in real depth.

Exercise

What are your passions? What is the one thing you would do to earn a living? How can you leverage that passion to earn an income? What will you do despite obstacles and sacrifices?

5. FINDING YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE

"You can live a lifetime and, at the end of it, know more about other people than you know about yourself." - Beryl Markham

Before you can promote your expertise, you must know what it is. Surprising though it may be, many professionals, independent consultants and other individuals do not take the time to identify the areas in which they specialize.

To figure out your own expertise, I suggest that you ask yourself at least two questions:

- Does the majority of my work fit into a particular area?
- Do I have any specific training that pertains to my work?

As you examine the work that you are doing, you may find that you discover a pattern. This pattern could be an indication of your area of expertise.

Perhaps you do most of your work for clients in a particular industry. On the other hand, perhaps you do mostly one type of work. For example, a web designer may discover that they do most of their web design work for non-profit organizations. Or, they might find that most of their work consists of designing logos. Another example, an accountant may discover that they do most of their work in risk management government. Or they might find that most of their work is done for clients in the green environment.

Could this focus equal an area of expertise? It very well could.

You should also examine your formal and informal training to determine whether you have an area of expertise. Simply having a degree does not mean that you are an expert. Many people never actually work in the field in which they receive a degree. However, if you do have training AND if you've used it extensively, then you may have found an area of expertise.

To become a credible expert it first helps if you choose your niche carefully. If your niche is too broad - like "all business advisory services" - you'll find it hard to position yourself as a true expert. Of course, it will help enormously if you choose a niche in an area that genuinely interests you ... your passion.

Once you have identified that passion, you can identify your developmental needs so that you can deliver on the expert perception which you will create amongst your audiences.

I often laugh silently when I think of how I simply wanted to teach people how to introduce themselves, give firm handshakes and give business cards. Deep self-reflection, experiences and many hours of self-study have produced a training programme beyond personal veneers. In my last full-time job, I was a senior executive administrator at The South African Institute of

Chartered Accountants before I entered the professional speaking and consultancy environment ... a far cry from professional public speaking.

When I decided to pursue my passion, I invested hours in researching books on public speaking, I watched many YouTube recordings of speakers who I admire and I presented many hours to myself. Why? I had to ensure that my expert personal brand message can deliver to the experience that I would give to my audiences. Sadly, today there are many individuals who don't want to put the work in creating their expert reputations. Some foolishly appoint social media services providers and public relations companies to communicate their so-called expertise without receiving assistance to deliver on these expert personal brand promises. In other words, they are not authentic...they are not the real thing!

Exercise

What is your expertise? What is your niche? What gaps must you bridge in order to deliver on the promises you are making as an expert?

6. GOT EXPERTISE?

“Strategically planning your personal brand allows you to stake your claim as the authority in your industry and position your brand as the only choice brand.” Rachel Quilty

After you have honed an area of expertise, you will find that there are plenty of opportunities to take your message on the road. Merely having an area of expertise doesn't help your business if no one knows about it. Here are a few steps to take your message to the road:

Get your name in print as an expert

One of the fastest ways to get the word out is to get your name in print. An article on paper earns you more expert points than an article on the web. Best of all, if your niche is, for instance, financial services get an article printed in one of the financial magazines that serves that industry.

Now you're getting in front of hundreds or even thousands of prospective clients. It's not an ad. It's better than an ad. You're presenting yourself as a true expert, with the implicit endorsement of the editor of the publication.

It's the strangest thing ... but as soon as someone sees your name in print, your 'expert' status automatically jumps up several notches. Contact the printed media that focus on your market and call them to ask them if they would be interested in considering your articles. Remember articles with practical tips without aggressive marketing are more likely to be received favourably.

Publish your articles online as an expert

Publish your articles on your own website. And make it known that other site editors can reprint your articles on their own sites and in their newsletters. And, of course, every article should include a short bio and link back to your own site.

If you Google my name “Karl Smith” you will discover that I have a global presence through my many articles. This is in line with my Personal Brand Vision Statement “Internationally Recognized Networking and Business Relationship Building expert”

Blogging positions you as an expert

Social media and blogging can level the playing field and provide access to an audience that was impossible to reach without using “traditional” media such as television and print until recently. No longer do you need to become a television celebrity or write a best-seller to become well-known. By using your blog and social media network correctly, you can access a targeted audience and establish yourself as an expert by simply turning on your computer.

Once you’ve started your blog, be sure to create posts that demonstrate your expertise. Blogging solely about your personal life will not position you as an expert. One way to write a post about your area of expertise is to answer common questions about your subject matter. After your own blog is established, you can branch out to writing on other blogs. Visit other blogs that also deal with your area of expertise. Leave well thought out comments that address the blogger’s topic.

After you have developed a relationship with another blogger, don’t be afraid to contact that blogger to see if you can write a guest post for their blog. Posting on other blogs can enhance your positioning as an expert in your subject matter.

Establishing a Social Network as an expert

The first step in establishing your status and becoming known as an expert through social networking is to find out where the people who need your expertise are “hanging out”. This may vary depending on what your area of expertise is. For me, Facebook and LinkedIn have been very useful. But don’t forget niche social sites such as DestinyConnect, Skills Universe etc as potential areas to connect with people of similar interests also.

Use the search functions of the various communities to find and listen in on conversations. Try to identify the thought leaders in the groups and engage them in conversation. When you do find a discussion which you can add valuable information to, do so. Again, you’re trying to answer questions and solve problems. This is not the time to try to sell your products or services.

With time, patience and persistence, you’ll find that you’ve developed a sizable network of people that will look toward you when they need advice or assistance within your field. You’ll

also find that others are linking to your blog and referencing your posts and links. In other words, these people will see you as the expert in your field.

Accept those invitations to speak as an expert

Once your name has appeared as the author of a sufficient number of useful, expert articles, you'll start getting invitations to speak. If they don't come your way, start looking for them. You can start out small, speaking to local business groups and marketing associations. To get started, look for a list of professional groups in your area and contact each one to find out if they are interested in learning more about your specialty. If there is an interest, offer to give a talk about your area of expertise.

If all goes well, you'll soon find yourself with opportunities to speak to much larger groups at industry conferences. Polish your public speaking skills to gain confidence. And yes, being a speaker earns you major expert points.

I earned R50.00 for my first in-house workshop a few years ago and I conducted my first presentation for networking associations free of charge! I have done so deliberately as part of my credibility building plan. My first networking coaching client approached me a week after that interactive workshop!

Avoid a “hard sell” of your services during your free presentation, but do include a handout with your business information on it. For example, if you specialize in compiling independent reviews following the implementation of the new Companies Act earlier this year, then a presentation to your business association should give a general overview of the difference between an independent external audit and an independent review rather than a discussion of what your firm does.

You can also teach to establish your positioning as an expert. Offer a short series of seminars on your topic or contact a local educational institution to find out if you would be qualified to teach. Listen to your audiences for feedback.

Time to write a book as an expert

Nothing brings you expert status faster than being the author of a book. Do you know enough on your subject to write a book? It may take a little time before you're ready. But the more articles you write and the more times you speak, the deeper your knowledge will grow. Be sincere in writing your book and walk the talk.

I have written three books - *“Beyond The Business Handshake: Dare To Build High-Trust Business Relationships”*, *“Networking Etiquette 101”* and *“Secrets To Getting Referrals”* - with the aim to tell a story and share my knowledge in my quest to help others. I was fortunate to have mentor to guide me from concept to delivery. Also, I attended a workshop to equip myself with knowledge on how to write a book.

If you can get published and distributed by a major publishing house, so much the better. If not, self-publish. You'll need to do a lot of promoting to get the sales, but you can earn more money from each book sold and still confirm your status as an expert in your field.

Be a results maker as an expert

Show that you have made results doing the same thing. In other words, show the results you have attained by putting the best practices into practical use.

When you have these two skill sets, complete research and practical results, then you can position yourself as an expert because you have perspective on what is going on ... you know what everyone else is doing – and you have also done it successfully and produced results.

You have what it takes to position yourself as an expert and provide information and strategies that are invaluable to people who want to overcome the same challenges you have and create similar results.

The following twelve examples will help you build credibility and help convince other people that you are an expert within your field.

- **Perspective.** Say you have perspective of the industry, challenge or problem by showing that you have done the research and created results.
- **Philosophy.** You can show that you are an expert by your philosophy. If you look at the world in a different way, people will pay attention if your perspective will help them solve a problem or avoid a loss.
- **Your personal path** is your greatest credibility – you don't have to show your wealth – they want to know about your struggles – and how you can save them time. By figuring out what you accomplished ... you have solutions.
- **Your position** – your job title. People are often impressed by titles more than wealth. Share the various rolls and positions you have fulfilled. You are the creator of this, you are the author of that, a founder of this, a director, a CEO, – you must reference this in your bio, in your video, in your speeches...
- **Popularity** – we have the best selling, the most downloaded, the most views ... Many beginning experts do not yet have these examples of social proof, but once you have these hooks you can stack on these to add credibility to your other accomplishments.
- **Partnerships** – if you have ever partnered with another credible expert in your field, co-author why don't you talk about them. You get borrowed credibility.
- **Progress** – if you have taken a project from here to there, from bad to good, – tell those stories – they have come a long way – they got results...
- **Praise** - testimonials, how you are a good person, how your products help people etc.

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- **Press** – performances – if you have ever been in the media, share those stories of who you shared the stage with.
- **Paying clients** – who has paid you as a client? Experts who pay you, big or small.
- **Promotions** – when you are told about somebody by a third party, you gain credibility. Endeavour to enlist other experts to endorse and promote you.
- **Product** - to complete the journey of becoming an expert, you actually need to have something to sell. It can be ebooks, speeches, presentations – anything that you can package – now people can pay you for your help.

7. TAKING ACTION

To be successful, you have to do what successful people do and successful people are highly action-oriented. To discover, package and communicate your expert personal brand will require that you act on your plans. Yes, actions do speak louder than words. The old statement that ‘knowledge is power’ is flawed; knowledge is only potential power: Nothing happens in this world until you take action.

If you want uncommon results for your personal brand, you must undertake uncommon action on purpose, with the right intent, taking responsibility, with persistence, with resolve, with passion and according to your plan. The world doesn’t pay you for what you know; it pays you for what you do. So are you “going” to do something? Or are you doing it?

8. Conclusion

"If you don't fully believe in yourself, you'll naturally resist stepping into the spotlight. This resistance has left many individuals unprepared for today's ultra-competitive business world".

Karl Smith

Positioning yourself as the go-to person in your field is a smart marketing strategy. When you’re promoting the brand “You” as an expert, everything you do — and everything you choose not to do — communicates the value and character of the brand expertise.

You want to be in a position that people in your network are recommending you for advice or when you speak, they look at you as an expert. Then you can go about mentioning the benefits of your products or services and clients will take it at face value that you are HELPING them rather than SELLING to them.

Your expert personal brand will create sales opportunities through networking and referrals but you must still equip yourself with tools for your sales presentations and helping your prospects to make buying decisions in a sincere manner.

Karl Smith/ How To Position Your Personal Brand as an Expert in Your field

It takes work, a good plan, and support to achieve expert status, but it's well worth the effort. Start by believing in your own expertise. Identify your development gaps and obtain the necessary learning. Then, step-by-step start to position yourself as a credible authority. Over time, you will *earn* and declare expert status. Then, adopt a mindset to continue to reinvent your personal brand to stay relevant to your audiences and their needs.

MEET THE AUTHOR



Widely renowned as Africa's foremost networking and business relationship building expert, Karl Smith is the CEO and founder of Business Networking South Africa. He is a self-improvement teacher, coach and consultant specializing in helping people build maps for personal success and significance. His workshops, conference speaking, articles and books, including *"Beyond The Business Handshake: Dare To Build High-Trust Business Relationships"*, *"Networking Etiquette 101"* and *"Secrets To Getting Referrals"* have helped hundreds worldwide tap into their potential.

He has shared the **global speaking stage** with some of the world's top professional inspirational speakers such as Prof Dr Lothar Seiwert (Germany) and Geoff Ramm (UK). In 2010 he was nominated by Spice4life as **One of the Men We Love/Men Who Inspire Us** as well as **Business Man of the Month** by Men's Inc, an online magazine and in 2008 Karl was named **Speaker of the Year** by the Fine Women Business Network. He is consistently ranked by audience surveys as "knowledgeable", "insightful," "entertaining," "motivating" and "pragmatic."

Some of Karl's conference speaking topics:

- ❖ Relationship Capital: What is the value of your network?
- ❖ The Power of The Brand Me Inc
- ❖ Developing Mutual Trust in Your Organisation... For Sustained High Performance
- ❖ Secrets To Getting Referrals
- ❖ Fly With The Eagles: Repositioning Yourself For Personal Excellence

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For more topics and free resources Visit www.businessnetworkingsouthafrica.co.za today!

PSST! Don't Keep Karl A Secret!