

Actionable Steps To Become An Authority

Becoming an authority, in any field, is not easy. Not only do you need to know more and have better skills than everyone else in your niche, but you also need to market yourself properly and network with others. The exact path you should take is up to you, of course, but in this chapter you'll find suggested steps that everyone who's trying to become an authority in their field should consider. Give everything a fair consideration and don't rule anything out too fast, as you never know what'll work unless you try it all.

Write and publish a book

If you want to be treated like an expert in your field, there is arguably no better way than writing a book and having it published. Nothing wrong with Kindle books and information products, but a real hardcopy book (not self-published) is a lot more impressive since the barrier to entry is much higher. If it sells well then great, if not you can still benefit a lot from it just from the status it gives you to have had a book published. The next time someone questions your authority on the subject, just point to your book and they're likely to change their opinion about you real quick...

If you're lucky enough to pull off a bestseller in your niche you can bet on it to open a lot of doors for you. It may take a few tries to get there, and no doubt there is a lot of work involved, but it is well worth the effort.

It's understandable that writing a whole book might seem daunting, but if you just take it one chapter at a time it doesn't have to be so bad. If you're knowledgeable about the topic but feel like writing isn't really your thing, you can always hire a ghostwriter to write it for you.

Start a blog

If you feel you have a lot to say about your topic, consider starting your own blog. It's a great way to show off your expertise and personality. Fact is, if you want true expert status in your niche, you'll find it very difficult to reach your goal without a blog or some other kind of outlet where people can learn from you and get some insight into who you are. It will also act as a "business card" of sorts that you can refer people you meet to, so make sure you use a domain

name that's easy to remember (usually a .com is preferable over others). Not to mention the opportunities you can find by simply networking and interacting with other bloggers in your niche, so remember to stay active in discussions.

Don't worry if you don't consider yourself much of a writer - as long as you've got something interesting to say, people will listen. Usually writing in a laid-back, casual tone and using a spellchecker is sufficient.

A common problem with blogs is that after a couple of years (sometimes even months), the owner runs out of things to blog about, or simply gets tired of the constant writing. This is something you'll have to plan for and do your best to avoid, as it's without a doubt the most common reason why some promising blogs never reach their full potential.

Guest blog and publish articles

When you're just starting to build up your authority status, chances are you're an unknown nobody in your niche. Even if you have a ton of interesting insights to share on your blog and social networks, you need to draw traffic and eyeballs to them somehow. Guest blogging and writing articles for other websites (maybe even magazines) are great for that!

The more readers the blog or website you want to write for has, the harder it will usually be to get your article accepted. Some popular blogs get dozens of guest blogging requests every week, and you need to make sure you stand out. It definitely helps if you're familiar enough with the site/magazine to know what kind of content they're looking for so you can tailor your proposal accordingly.

Usually you'll have to start writing for some smaller sites, as the larger and more popular ones will probably want to see other articles you've had published before. You can then refer them to your articles on those smaller sites, and slowly work your way up to the most visited sites in your niche. It may take some time but along the way you will gain more and more recognition, and even direct traffic to your blog from links in the "author bio" section of the articles.

Build a social media presence

If you want to become an authority you need some sort of social media presence, there's simply no way around it. That doesn't mean you have to spend 4 hours every day interacting on social networks, but you should at the very least try to participate once a day.

Which sites to use depends on both your own personal preference as well as the preference of the "community" in general in your niche. In some niches Twitter is king, others seem to prefer Facebook, Pinterest or Google +. If you're uncertain of where to put in most of your efforts, just look at what other authorities in your niche are doing. Are they spending most of their day tweeting, discussing in Facebook groups or something else? Look towards what they're doing and try to do it better - just don't straight up copy their approach.

Social networks aren't for everyone, and it seems that most people either enjoy them or hate them. If you're in the latter group you could try to find the social media outlet that you like the most and focus only on that. As long as you're doing something and participating *somewhere*, it's much better than not having a social media presence at all.

Participate on industry forums

If there are any active forums in your niche you should make it one of your main goals to become a well known member of them, perhaps even a moderator. Forums might be considered "old school" by some, but the fact remains that many of them get thousands of visitors every day, and members who take the time to participate can quite easily build up their authority on that particular forum (and in the niche in general).

The same basic rules apply as on social media - try to login and participate in discussions at least once per day. The more the better, of course. Yes, it is definitely time-consuming but the potential rewards are great. When you're an established member of a forum you'll enjoy plenty of perks, such as the ability to draw traffic to your own blog/site. You can also use the forums for announcements, like if you were to write a book and wanted to announce the launch.

In the beginning, though, you should focus on just being helpful and not the slightest bit self promoting. Just like most other methods, this is a marathon and if you go too fast in the beginning you won't be able to make it to the finish line. Just stick to answering questions and maybe posting a discussion of your own once in a while and you'll see results eventually.

Teach others what you know

Taking on a teaching role is an excellent way to improve your authority. Ever since we were kids we've been told to respect the authority of teachers, and that's something that stays with us. And, by all means, someone who decides to set aside the time and effort required to teach others deserves that respect.

Exactly how you choose to go about it is up to you. You can stick to simply writing tutorials and guides, or you can go "all in" and launch a full course where you teach people everything you know. Either way, to be truly successful with this path you need to be patient and prepare for answering a *lot* of questions. Teaching can be quite draining, but also very rewarding when you see that your "students" are learning from you.

Don't jump into the more advanced forms of teaching until you've already started to make a name for yourself though, as you need people to already trust you and your abilities. If it's not commonly accepted that you're an expert in your niche you may not yet have the credibility required to start teaching. Starting small by publishing tutorials and guides could be a great first step to gain that credibility before launching a full course.

Network with other experts in your niche

Just associating and networking with other experts in your niche will do much for your reputation and authority. It is also a great way to stay updated with the latest developments in your niche.

Many highly successful experts participate in mastermind groups on a regular basis. Trying to befriend the top authorities in your niche and getting an invite to their mastermind group (if they have one) should be one of your main goals to work towards. Usually people in mastermind groups are very helpful, regularly exchanging knowledge and favors. For example, how much would it

help to have one of the largest bloggers in your niche plug your own blog on their social media accounts? It could potentially send thousands of visitors, and have you go from a complete nobody to a recognized authority overnight. That's just how powerful this can be.

As always though, you will probably not be able to jump straight into the elite layer of your niche, but rather start small and work your way up. In many cases starting your own mastermind group and inviting other experts in your niche to it is the way to go when you're just starting out. Just make sure you have something to offer them to make it worth their while.

Speak at events

This is another situation where you'll most likely need to start small, unless you've already built up some reputation and credibility in your niche. Once you've reached a point where people are actually interested in hearing what you say, though, public speaking is an excellent way to cement your status as an authority in your niche.

When you're just starting out, consider focusing on getting a spot at a smaller industry event. You will still need to be able to prove your abilities though, so it helps if you at least have a blog and a small following already. You should also plan in detail what you're going to talk about before reaching out, so you can give them all the details they need and convince them that you'll do a good job.

Most people aren't very comfortable with public speaking, and if you're one of them you might want to consider joining your local Toastmasters group to improve your skills and make it a bit less frightening. It does get easier with practice, and once you've gotten started you'll most likely find it both fun and rewarding.

Host seminars/webinars

While hosting a webinar can easily be done even early on when you're still somewhat unknown, a real-life seminar shouldn't be considered until you've had several successful presentations as a speaker at other events. It's almost like hosting an entire event on your own, relying on your name to attract an audience. It is not something you can do until you've already built up a decent

following and become a household name in your niche. Since hosting a real-life seminar can also be a costly affair you'll most likely have to charge for it - another reason why it's not easily done when you're not an established authority already.

Webinars are different though as they require much less effort from the audience, considering they don't have to show up in person. They just have to log on to a website, see what you have to say, and if they don't like it they can just close the browser window. That said, don't think marketing a webinar is super easy either, because it's not. This is where already being an established member of a forum, having a successful blog, or being active on social media can really pay off, as you can market your webinar through all those channels.

Create a community

An alternative to becoming well known in an established community (like a forum) is building one yourself, positioning yourself as the founder, leader and expert. This may be an especially attractive alternative in niches where there aren't a lot of communities already - otherwise you'll find yourself competing in what could be a very competitive space.

You can use any platform you like, ranging from forums to discussions on social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn. Whenever possible it's usually better to use a self-hosted option like a forum, as that puts you in complete control over the community. There's no harm in starting by creating a Facebook group and then transitioning to a self-hosted forum later on though - in fact that can be a smart thing to do as getting a forum off the ground without an existing audience can be very tough. People simply don't like putting in the effort of participating on what looks like a "dead" forum.

However you choose to do it, be prepared that it will take a lot of time and effort before you've built up your community to a decent size, especially if you're in a smaller niche and starting from scratch. Like most things though, it's something you can take one step at a time. It doesn't have to go from zero to super popular in a week!

Takeaways

- If at all feasible, consider writing and publishing a book to significantly boost your status as an authority in your field
- Blogging is great for both networking with others in your niche as well as giving you an outlet to share your knowledge with others
- To get your name out there when you're just starting out, consider writing articles and blog posts for other websites and/or magazines
- An active social media presence is an absolute must but where and how to do it best is different in every niche, so do some research into what existing authorities in your niche are doing
- Don't underestimate the power of "old school" forums to build up a reputation
- Devoting yourself to teaching others about your niche is an excellent way to build up a loyal following and cement your authority status
- Public speaking and hosting seminars/webinars should definitely be considered if you have the opportunity, even if it may seem daunting at first

I'm An Authority - Now What?

Okay, so you've put in the hard work and you're finally recognized as an authority in your field. Good work! All you have to do now is make a plan that keeps you in this position indefinitely. This is actually quite important, because if you just sit back and remain passive at this point you will find the status you've worked so hard for slipping slowly away. People are quick to forget and there are always new competitors trying to steal your place in the spotlight, so you've got to take an active approach even if it feels like you've got it made.

Now, exactly *how* active you want to be is up to you. Some people who become authorities in the fields never stop working and improving, while others (deservedly) slow down a bit to enjoy the rewards of their hard work.

Staying active

If you want to stay active, your best bet is simply keeping up with the activities from the last chapter. Chances are there is at least one idea or method you haven't been utilizing fully, in which case now may be a great time to try it out. Maybe you've built a huge following on Facebook but you're still a nobody on Twitter, or you're the top blogger in your niche but you've never written a book.

A lot of people who reach this stage recruit others to help them keep up with their blogging, social media and all the other things that technically do not require their personal attention. That can work very well, as long as it's clear who's actually writing the blog posts or responding on Twitter. There's nothing wrong with building a team to become even better, just don't try to pass it off as if you're doing all of it yourself. Sooner or later someone will see through it, and that could potentially be fatal for your reputation.

Branching out to other niches

If you're still hungry for more you may also want to consider branching out to other, larger niches that are related to the one you've been focusing on. You can almost always go bigger, unless you're already an authority in a huge niche like "health" or "money" (if you are, congratulations!). Actually, it doesn't even have to be a related niche, what's more important is that your existing audience would be interested in your new focus.