

3 Secrets of Becoming and Accidental Industry Expert

People pay to hear from industry experts - not speakers. Yet 50% of industry experts are experts by accident - not by design, they did not set out to be an expert. Often their passion for their area of expertise, experience and wisdom converted into 'expert status', purely because they became a 'go to person' in that industry. This was the certainly the case with my profile as 'Robyn Henderson - Networking Specialist'. Over time that has changed from Networking Specialist to Global Networking Specialist to Networking Strategic Initiatives Specialist to Networking Strategist. The title range has evolved as my work has diversified from basically taking the pain out of attending networking events through to creating a networking strategy for potential strategic alliances and collaborations for a variety of clients.

When I launched my speaking career in 1990 and wrote and self-published my first networking book in 1992, it was never my intention to become an expert. At the time I was running a women's networking group in Sydney, holding two events each month and was very concerned at the way people would come to an event, sit and talk only with their friends and leave with their friends. Then post event they would question why they never generated any new business - how could they? They never talked to any strangers.

Secondly, I met with a mentor, Doug Malouf and asked the question - 'I want to be a professional speaker, what do you recommend that I do?' He suggested that I write a book about something that I was very passionate about - because I would be speaking about it for a long time.

At the time I had no plan other than my mentor's 'to do list' which included a handful of things to do starting with - write a book. And I did write and self-publish my first book *Networking For \$uccess* in 1992. (just a tip, never put a \$ sign as part of a word, it confuses every tracking system).

Interestingly, the first Australian book on networking was written in the late '80s by an author who was in fact ahead of the networking trend. I was fortunate that the early '90s was the start of a global swing towards professional networking groups and networking in general.

Here are three questions that may assist you to build your profile and create that go-to-person status in your specific industry or profession.

1. Why do you want to become an industry expert?

Responses may include - increase your income, satisfy your need for recognition, gain acknowledgement for an area you are obsessed with, expand your career opportunities or please others. You may also want to change the world to your way of thinking or whatever your reasons are.

TIP: When the going gets tough - and it will get tough on your road to fame, you need to be very clear on WHY you are seeking this label, title or profile.

2. Where do you want to be an expert?

Today we live in a borderless society and the internet has opened the global borderless marketplace to us. Your industry expert status may expand to cover your community, city, state, country, the Asia Pacific region and/or the world. You might be a total online expert, or a combination of online and offline expert. In time you will create your own tribe of followers who will help to build your industry expert.

TIP: Being a world expert might sound appealing if you love to travel and don't want to be home much. Again, the internet and social media is a wonderful enabler for global domination. However, I would suggest you become very well known in your own state or country - before you seek the global market. That is unless you have a very big budget and incentive for world domination.

3. Who owns your 'space' now and how long have they owned it?

Once you identify your competitors - global and national and research these people thoroughly, you may choose to create a strategic alliance with the experts that you align the most with. Be very clear on the outcome you are aiming for with these allies.

TIP: In the last twenty-five years, many people have become networking experts - I have formed alliances with a number of them by creating non-fiction compilation books and inviting them to contribute to the books (e.g. Network or Perish, Strategic Networking). Plus, several years ago, I was invited by Ivan Misner to be a contributing author to USA best seller Masters of Networking. Consider your competitors and what potential alliances are possible within this group. And of course, if your offer or advance is rejected, that's okay too.

All the best with building your industry expert status and of course if I am not yet connected to you on LinkedIn, let's make that happen.

For more article by Robyn Henderson visit www.networkingtowin.com.au or check out her LinkedIn profile.

