

7 Unconventional Ways to Explode Your Business as the Industry Influencer



Donna Gunter



Introduction

Being viewed as an authority in your field is important because it immediately sets you apart from your competitors. When you think of Internet search engines, Google is the first word that pops into your mind. Facebook immediately comes to mind when you think of online social networks, and Apple is top of the list when smart phones and tablets are mentioned.

All of those companies have been around for some time. They have worked very hard to develop customer loyalty. Longevity is often important in helping a company build a reputation as the leader in a particular marketplace. However, this is not always the case. Thanks to global Internet access and the World Wide Web, even a small, brand-new company can quickly develop an authoritative presence in just about any field.....

.....if they follow a proven path to success.

How can you or your company benefit from the respect and admiration that comes with being an influential leader in your market, even if you are just starting out? There are several proven strategies to shorten your path to becoming an authority in your niche. In this reports you'll discover below are 7 actionable steps to help you start building your reputation as a leading influencer in your marketplace and explode the growth of your business.

Let me know if I can help you in any way!

Warmly,

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“Niche” Down and Focus

No matter what business you're in, you can learn a lot about becoming an authority figure in your field from NFL Draft Expert Mel Kiper, Jr. Even if you don't care for football, or even sports in general, the following story illustrates how anyone can go from a "nobody" to the global leader in a targeted market in a very short period of time.

In the late 1970s in Baltimore, Maryland, Mel Kiper, Jr. was a teen-ager who loved the National Football League (NFL). The NFL is the largest professional football organization in the world. Kiper wrote player evaluation charts, showing what college football players he thought would be a good fit for the NFL.

The problem was, he was a total unknown, and no one took him seriously.

While attending school at Essex Community College in Baltimore in 1981, the young entrepreneur nevertheless started Kiper Enterprises, calling it an "NFL Talent Evaluation Business." When anyone asked him his name, he would say, "Mel Kiper, NFL draft expert." The NFL draft is the process by which teams select college football athletes to play for their franchises.

At that time, there was no such thing as an NFL draft expert. Very few people paid attention to the draft, except if you were personally associated with college football or NFL teams. Not to be swayed, Kiper continued releasing a yearly draft report, and talking up the importance of his evaluations for the annual draft to anyone and everyone who would listen.

A young ESPN network hired the self-professed draft expert in 1984. He tirelessly suggested to the growing 24-hour sports network that they needed to start covering the NFL draft before anyone else did. Today, thanks to Kiper's efforts in establishing himself as the preeminent authority in his field, the NFL draft is a multi-million-dollar franchise, which draws year-round attention from football fans and media channels.

And guess who is viewed as the top global expert?

That's right: Mel Kiper, Jr.

Kiper could have called himself a college football expert. However, that was a huge field, with thousands of individuals who were extremely knowledgeable about college football. His knowledge of the NFL meant he could have sold himself as a National Football League expert. The same situation existed there, with too much intelligent competition.



“Niche” Down and Focus

So he did what you should do.

He dug down deeper than anyone else, and found a niche which no one else was serving. He also ensured that he focused on an evergreen business.

Evergreen markets are viable year after year, providing a lifetime of revenue and profits to the authority figures in those markets. While you can't foresee huge changes in technology, at least try to focus on markets that don't change from year to year. As an extreme example, centering your business around this year's iPhone model will limit your authority to the period of about a year. However, becoming an expert on all things related to iPhones and iPads would at least keep you evergreen while iPhones/iPads are still being sold. You just have to stay on top of all the changes.

Fans of both college and pro football, NCAA and NFL executives, coaches, managers and owners, as well as prominent college and even high school athletes were Kiper's target market. By placing a laser focus on a small niche market (the NFL draft), rather than a large market (the NFL or college football), Kiper became the #1 NFL draft expert "overnight."

Your lesson?

Don't sell yourself as just another dog trainer. Begin calling yourself the world's greatest trainer of Appenzeller Sennenhundes. Don't open a hot dog stand. Sell vegan hot dogs, served on almond flour buns, with a wide variety of natural, organic condiments and toppings.

Niche down far enough in your market or area of expertise and you will find a group of rabidly enthusiastic prospects which are being under-served. This is possible in any and every market, and can dramatically shorten your path to being viewed as an authoritative influence in your field.



Communicate with Stories

The previous example about Mel Kiper, Jr. and niche marketing was relayed through a story. Storytelling has been used to record human history long before writing was even developed. Stories are still very powerful today. You can connect with people on an emotional, mental, and even spiritual level if you learn the art of storytelling.

You may be thinking your products and services don't have any heart-pounding, eyebrow-raising, dramatic stories surrounding them. In most cases, you would be wrong. Consider the case of the advertisement which has made more than 2 billion dollars for the Wall Street Journal. (Yes, that is billion, with a "B".) It begins like this:

"On a beautiful late spring afternoon, twenty-five years ago, two young men graduated from the same college. They were very much alike, these two young men. Both had been better than average students, both were personable and both - as young college graduates are - were filled with ambitious dreams for the future.

Recently, these men returned to their college for their 25th reunion.

They were very much alike. Both were happily married. Both had three children. And both, it turned out, had gone to work for the same Midwestern manufacturing company, and were still there.

But there was a difference. One of the men was manager of a small department of that company. The other was its president."

The ad goes on to show that the only difference between these 2 young men was that the company president read the *Wall Street Journal*, and the other man did not. ([Read the entire ad here](#). It's a great example of how storytelling can be used effectively for any product or service.)

What can be more boring, less sexy, and further down your list of priorities than a newspaper subscription? However, because a compelling story was used to connect with its target audience, this short, 2-page advertisement was used for decades because it was so effective in showing the *Wall Street Journal* as the leading market influence for business and financial news.

In short, use stories to communicate your personal or business message whenever possible.



Be Helpful

Have you ever sought help from someone who was very knowledgeable in a particular area? Of course you have. We do it all the time. When someone answers a question, or solves a problem that has been bothering you, you instantly look at that person as an influential figure. After all, they provided you with a solution you could not obtain on your own.

So you view that person with a sense of respect and admiration.

That should be your job if you want to build your range of influence. Join forums relative to your market. Join, or start your own, groups on Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks where you can share your market expertise with others in your field.

Put your mind in a place of selflessness.

Don't worry about sales and profits for a little while, and try not to have a sales-oriented mindset. Just offer advice and valuable content that does 1 of these 2 things for your prospects:

1. Relieves a pain
2. Delivers a pleasure

Every important decision a human being makes is hinged upon either relieving a pain, or delivering a pleasure. So focus on publishing helpful content online and offline that solves a big problem, or creates a pleasurable experience for your market.

Your market influence will grow, as will your reputation as someone who truly cares about others. That is certain to set you apart from other industry influencers.



Build Strong Relationships

Who are the most important people in your life? Are they strangers, people you know nothing about? No, the people that matter the most to you are those that you have developed strong relationships with.

Because of the way you feel for them, these people have a very strong influence over your actions.

Becoming an important industry influence requires building quality relationships, just like you do in your personal life. This can mean hard work in some cases. Think about your most important and valuable relationships. They probably require a little work from time to time. They are not effortlessly maintained.

Take the necessary time to build deeper relationships with other industry influencers in your market or niche. If you connect on a very real level with someone who is seen as a market leader, by proxy you are also viewed as an important force in that marketplace.

Other influencers are not the only people you should be developing rich relationships with, however.

Your customers, prospects, and anyone else in your field should be the source of your relationship-making efforts. Get out there, making yourself visible to anyone and everyone in your niche. Once you make an initial connection, do more listening than talking, and make sure you provide more "give" than "take."

Just a handful of important relationships can help you weather any storm that comes along in your industry. These relationships are often a great source of business partnerships which can further the influence of both parties in your market.



Grow Your Knowledge and Expertise

Take a minute and think about the people you consider authorities and leaders. You undoubtedly think of those people as knowledgeable experts, no matter what field they're in. This is how you must strive to be viewed in order to effectively paint a picture of yourself as a market influence.

True leaders never stop learning.

They thirst for knowledge and information concerning their field of endeavor. They want to be on the cutting-edge of innovation, technology, marketing, sales, and every other aspect of their business. Accordingly, they spend a great deal of their time talking to other leaders in their field, attending seminars and conferences, reading trade journals, and devouring any and all industry information they can get their hands on.

If you are in an especially competitive field, the right knowledge can save your business. If you get a hold of a piece of information before any other industry influencers, you have your hands on a potential golden goose.

Procurement of knowledge also means improving your skills.

You know what business areas you need to improve upon. Don't spend time working on what you are already proficient at doing. Brush up on those skills and market areas where you aren't so strong. Combined with industry knowledge and a constant effort at working to become better in your market, a well-rounded skill set can ensure you are viewed as an important influence in your field.



Write a One-Problem, One-Solution Book

There's a proven, very effective marketing method that has stood the test of time and is superb at positioning you as the educator and advocate for their target market. What is that? Writing a book about your expertise and use that to grow your business.

This is the most effective marketing strategy that can open up huge opportunities for your business, some of which you could never dream. Best of all, YOU don't have to write it. You can easily speak your book, be interviewed about your book, or hire a ghostwriter to help you with your book.

Here's how having your own book can enhance your industry influence”

1. **Ultimate business card.**

Books are a great marketing tool that allows you to reach out to a wider audience and provide them with a solution to one of their major problems. When you publish a book about your expertise, you can give or sell copies to people during public speaking opportunities or even distribute them online. Books are the business card that lasts -- people will rarely throw away a book. They tend to keep it on their desks or bookshelves and refer to it repeatedly if it successfully helps them solve a major problem. When you give your book to someone, they instantly become pre-sold on you before you open your mouth, and you then become the welcomed guest rather than a pest who is trying to sell yourself or your services.

2. **Automatic lead generation.**

Give a copy of your book to all of your current clients and prospects to begin the lead generation process. When selling or giving your book away, be sure and collect your prospect's information and add that to your database (with permission, of course) so that you can follow up with that prospect in the future. If you are selling your book via a third party source, like Amazon, add a page at the beginning of your book that offers a valuable follow-up gift (video, audio, checklist, webinar) that goes into more detail about one of the points in your book. Ask readers for their names and email addresses in exchange for your offer.

3. **Media darling.**

Your book serves as a source of quality information for getting quoted in magazines, newspapers, and online blogs. Most radio and television stations and podcasts love having authors as guests on the shows they host. Therefore, a book can provide you with some amazing opportunities for free media exposure, which no other marketing channel can offer.



Write a One-Problem, One-Solution Book

4. Credibility.

Publishing a book provides you with instant expert status. Other people will now view you as an authority on your topic, as there is still a certain aura of respect, awe, and credibility that follows anyone who is a published author. A book will give credence to your expert status, as you knew enough about a topic to publish a book on it.

5. Increased referrals.

Customers trust authors who have written a book on their topic of expertise. Writing a book provides you and your business with increased public exposure and credibility. If you are using your book as your business card, give an additional copy or two and ask the recipient to distribute them to others that might need your expertise. This helps to increase the number of referrals for your business.

6. Increased revenue.

Writing a book helps to increase your marketing opportunities and generate more leads, which increases your revenue. It can also open new additional income streams such as consulting, speaking and product creation opportunities. The new expert status gained from publishing a book also allows you to charge more fees without the risk of losing customers; clients will pay more for an established expert.

As an entrepreneur, there are many reasons for writing a book. Whatever your goal in writing your book, the bottom line is that a book offers quality content that customers crave. It can also increase your marketing opportunities and generate more revenue for your business, thus creating the option for exponential growth.



Be Authentic

I had lunch several years ago with a colleague in a networking group. We talked about many things and were trying to get to know each other so that each of us could better understand what might make a great referral for the other. One of the things he told me caused me to chuckle because it seemed to surprise him.

He told me that he liked my website because I was straight-forward, to the point and I just "put it all out there". By that he meant that I outlined what I do, how I do it, the benefits of what I do, and that I let the visitor decide to either buy into it or not. Most surprisingly, I didn't seem to have any attachment to the visitor's decision either way. I didn't waste any time trying to convince visitors that I was always the right choice, regardless of circumstance. However, if the visitor does "buy" into what I'm offering, they have ample opportunities to get on one of my lists and/or purchase something from me.

My response to his observation was that, as a small business owner, I had the responsibility of discouraging as many people as possible from wanting to do business with me. I know this philosophy sounds crazy, especially when the gurus tell you to always be selling.

Here's my belief: I'm not out to sell my services or my products to the world, nor do I want to sell my services to everyone. I only work with clients who meet my ideal client profile and only market to those in my target market. Period. And, that's only a very small chunk of the world. Why? Because I truly believe that there's enough business for everyone.

My business and my life are so much more fun and joyful when I work only with clients that I love. I do that through what I call the WYSIWYG approach, or "What You See is What You Get." I am who I am and let that center of authenticity come through in all that I do-my speaking, my writing, my website, my coaching, my personal interactions.

If you don't "buy" into the business that is me, that's wonderful! You can continue your search for a consultant who better meets your needs, and I still have room in my practice for clients with whom I love to work. If you do drink my Kool-Aid, that is buy into what I do and who I am, you're doing it because on some level, you're buying into "Donna the Person," and the good, bad, and ugly that accompanies that.

Now that I'm firmly entrenched in middle age, I finally feel that I'm fully coming into my own in all aspects of my life, and I have stopped running away from those aspects that I think others might not like or might be offended by. Being myself for a living is so much easier than trying to live up to an image (or create an image) that doesn't really exist.



Be Authentic

When working in higher education, I always felt that I was split in two halves, Donna the Human Being and Donna the Housing Administrator. Rarely did the two Donnas meet - they were almost separate personalities, and quite frankly, Donna the Human Being (my true self) didn't really care for Donna the Housing Administrator at all. It's no wonder I felt exhausted all the time in that job - I was living two distinct lives, and one of those lives I really hated. The creation of my own business - and my own set of rules - has freed me to be me - and probably saved me thousands in therapy fees!

My role model in life is the late Ann Richards, former governor of the great state of Texas. Ann was bold, brave, humorous, bright, and embodied the best in a Southern/Texas woman, and made no bones about that. Long ago I decided to embrace my being a "southern girl from the sticks" (English translation-lived in the country in a small East Texas town) rather than trying to make myself over into something more palatable to a wider group.

A former client used to get the biggest kick out of the stories I would tell her about living in a small east Texas town while at the same time telling me I needed to move away from there to a more civilized place. I told her if I moved, she would lose her great source of funny stories that she could incorporate into her speeches, and I would lose what makes me "me."

As a small business owner, how can you incorporate "you" into your business so that your ideal clients are naturally drawn to you? What natural gifts and talents do you possess but aren't willing to acknowledge? Playing to your gifts and being who you are for a living is an extraordinarily rewarding way to run your business. Most importantly, it's what makes your business distinct - and helps you stand out in a sea of small businesses.



Conclusion

The seven action steps outlined in this report will go a long way towards building your authority status. Smart business owners target a smaller, well-defined market rather than a broad one. Using stories whenever you can to deliver content, information, and sales messages that connect with your audience on a very emotional level.

You should always be asking, "How can I help my market?" When you solve problems and help individuals with problems in your niche, without initially thinking about sales and profits, you develop strong relationships. Those relationships build your influence as your prospects, clients, and customers share your message for you.

Continually learning and staying ahead of the curve in your market or niche is extremely important. People respect knowledge and expertise. You should always strive to be the go-to expert with the most relevant and actionable knowledge in your field.

Turning your knowledge into a one-problem, one-solution book is the best way to get in front of a large number of prospects who desperately need what you offer.

These are just a few important pieces of the market influence puzzle. Consider them valuable tools in a large, well-equipped marketing toolbox.

If you'd like to learn more about becoming an authoritative market influence and be recognized as the ultimate leader in your field, be sure to set up your [Visibility Discovery Session here](#).



About Donna Gunter, Authority Positioning Accelerator



I work with business owners who are experts in their fields who are established in their industry and successful but are frustrated by encroaching competition. That means their marketing is more difficult and less effective. I help them by publishing an authority positioning book so that they can generate more qualified leads and better paying clients for their business. When they do that it makes all of their marketing easier and more effective and they find themselves positioned as the only choice for their clients.

Want to become the obvious choice for your prospects?

Set up a free 1:1 Visibility Discovery Session with me and you'll come away with the three best ways for you to show up as the obvious choice for prospective clients.

**Apply for a FREE
Discovery Session**
(click here for details)