

HOW TO BUILD YOUR IMAGE AS AN AUTHORITY:

It's Easier Than You Might Think

by Trey Ryder

Authority is not a fact, it's a perception. If clients and prospects think you're an authority, you are.

In his book *Influence*, social psychologist Robert Cialdini explains that you attract prospects and persuade them at the subconscious level when they look upon you as an authority. In addition, prospects who see you as an authority are more likely to follow your advice when you suggest a specific course of action.

What's more, when editors and producers recognize you as an authority, they often give you easy access to the media, which reinforces the perception. So your efforts to become an authority figure snowball, further enhancing your image, helping you attract more and more new clients.

How do you build your image as an authority?

Simple: You do what authorities do. Here are eight steps you can take.

1. Write articles for publication. One of the quickest ways to build the perception that you're an authority is to write articles and submit them to newspapers and magazines that reach your target prospects. Then mail reprints to your prospects and clients -- and watch your status soar!
2. Appear as a guest on radio talk shows. Send the shows' producers a query letter, outlining who you are, your qualifications, and what you can discuss that will interest the listening audience.
3. Offer opinions and advice on the TV news. Start by sending assignment editors a query letter explaining why your opinion or advice on a particular topic is credible, important and timely.
4. Present seminars to other lawyers. When you educate other attorneys, and mention this in your biography, prospects perceive you as the lawyers' lawyer, further elevating your stature as an authority.
5. Present seminars for your prospects. The more information you offer, the more credibility you build -- and the sooner prospects see you as a recognized authority in your field of law.
6. Write and publish a newsletter. This is a simple way to gain authority status, build credibility, persuade prospects and generate referrals.

7. Write a book. This time-proven method is still one of the best. Plus, if you get a major publisher, the publisher does the marketing for you.

8. Host a web site. Today, this is a must for lawyers. If you don't have a web site, prospects think something's wrong with you. And if you build an education-based web site, they perceive you as an authority.

In addition, you can take advantage of the trappings of authority -- things you already have or can acquire, like these:

9. Titles. The fact that you're a lawyer gives you a high level of credibility and authority.

10. Background and experience. The more you emphasize your education, skills and experience, the more you bolster your position as an authority.

11. Memberships. Emphasize your memberships in lawyer groups and bar associations. Also, feature every court to which you're admitted.

12. Clothing. Prospects are more willing to take direction from a person in a well-tailored suit than someone in casual clothes. When you're acting in your role as authority, make sure you're dressed for it.

13. Car. Motorists are slower to honk their horns at new, luxury cars than at older models. Luxury cars exude authority.

14. Office. The bigger your office, the more prospects see you as an authority. And if you have a corner office -- or a picture window with a view -- who could possibly question your advice!

The sooner prospects and editors perceive you as an authority, the sooner your momentum will snowball -- and the sooner your river of new clients will overflow its banks. Don't allow this powerful marketing force to slip through your fingers.

You'll attract more new clients when prospects and referral sources perceive you as an authority.

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