

Contact Information: Andy Masters, (407)595-5838-Phone, Andy@Andy-Masters.com
9931 Hatton Circle, Orlando, FL 33324, www.Andy-Masters.com

Expert Branding YOU: **Defeat Traditional Marketing** **by Having Them Come to You**

by Andy Masters, MA, CSP

A few years back, I was presenting as keynote speaker for a conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. The program went great, and after the program I strolled through the exhibit hall with over 100+ vendor booths, where I had an epiphany:

“All of these vendors...They are JUST LIKE ME. They are here with the hopes that conference attendees will buy their product or service.” As a full disclosure, keynote speakers always have something to sell—whether it’s books/products, coaching/consulting services, or to be hired as keynote speaker for another event.

Further, I recognized that *“these people are actually EXPERTS just like me.”* Each vendor has an expertise which can truly help their target market—the conference attendees. Each vendor possesses a wealth of personal and company expertise to assist with...:

- How to do things which will save money.
- How to do things which will increase sales.
- How to do things using a great new technology.
- How to do things more efficiently.
- How to do things more safely.

These people are JUST LIKE ME.

However, this is when the similarities ended, and the stark differences came alive:

- They paid money to be there.
- I was paid money to be there.

- They are stuck in a maze of 9x12 booths.
- I was up on a grand stage with big screens.

- They offer candy & key chains to get someone’s attention.
- I received 90 minutes of everyone’s undivided attention.

- They were viewed as “salespeople”.
- I was viewed as a trusted national “expert”.

This epiphany sparked the statement I now recite in many of my keynote programs:

*“People don’t want to be SOLD TO from a salesperson.
People want to hire EXPERTS they can TRUST who can truly HELP them.”*

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Let's explore similar contrasts vs. other forms of traditional marketing:

Magazines/Newspapers

- Sales & Marketing professionals buy ad space in trade or popular print magazines.
- EXPERTS are quoted, or have their articles printed in trade or popular magazines, because they provide new information, or specific solutions for their readership.

(...and people pay attention the article, while largely ignoring paid advertisements)

TV/Radio

- Sales & Marketing professionals buy ad space on TV/Radio.
- EXPERTS are interviewed on TV and radio programs because they possess interesting, new, or helpful content to many viewers.

(...and people pay attention the program, while ignoring or fast-forwarding paid commercials)

In other words:

“There is a much LESS EXPENSIVE, and much MORE EFFECTIVE form of marketing for many businesses. It's called EXPERT BRANDING.”

At that point, I felt like taking each individual vendor aside, shaking them, and exclaiming:

“Don't you get it? WHY NOT YOU? That should be YOU up there on that stage next year! That should be YOUR newsletter they are signing up for! That should be YOUR book they are reading! That should be YOU they see interviewed on TV! You can do this, too!”

Then my final epiphany struck: *“If only they knew how close they were.”*

So, how close are they? How close are YOU?

First, one must think differently:

“I AM an expert”. Yes, you are! Brainstorm each of the areas from major categories to simple tips in which YOU have expertise in—which could help people or organizations. Further, brainstorm: “How can I monetize all of the knowledge that is in my head?”

Then, consider: *“Who has these problems which I could help solve? Who has money to spend on these solutions? Where do they hang out (online & in-person)? Which publications? Which websites? Which conferences? What different channels should I penetrate to gain such free, yet credible exposure?”*

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Alas, Traditional Marketing:

Of course, as someone with an M.A.-Marketing (*and who used to teach MBA-level Marketing*)—I can't just throw proven traditional marketing principles out the window. So, ironically, this is where traditional marketing *does* come into play: *Market research. Target market vs. Fringe market. Competitive analysis. Understanding price points. Marketing materials. Positioning. Branding.*

With the right strategy and help, these processes can achieve wonders for many businesses.

Brand Yourself as an Expert:

The avenues for anyone to brand themselves as an expert have never been more accessible. Certainly, any individual or company can start an industry blog, have their own “expert” website, or gain a following on social media (*and I mean anyone*). Further, over the last 10-15 years, the barriers have been broken on who can publish a book, and publish a book quickly. Or, an e-book. Or, a white paper. This garners instant credibility and expertise, as you will always be known as author of “*101 Ways to Solve XYZ Problem*”. You can then leverage published books, published articles, keynote speeches, or media appearances—along with degrees, industry certifications, and career accomplishments to facilitate the packaging, positioning, and promotion of being an “EXPERT”.

By the Way, Afraid to Speak in Public?:

So is 95% of everyone else. Therefore, you have two options:

1. Trust an expert in the craft, and hire a professional speaker to eloquently deliver your proven material—who can engage, entertain, and most importantly—ignite your targeted audience of attendees to take ACTION.
2. Overcome your fears and be coached to develop into an AMAZING presenter.

Now, go unleash YOUR inner expert.

About the Author: Andy Masters, MA, CSP is an award-winning author, consultant, and international keynote speaker who has written 5 books, earned 4 degrees, and presented hundreds of Leadership, Sales/Service and personal development programs. Visit www.Andy-Masters.com (Click on Business) or email Andy@Andy-Masters.com for book information and speaking schedule availability.

Contact Info:

Andy Masters, M.A., CSP

Author/Speaker

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