

How to Become a Genuine, Recognized Expert in Your Field

By Bob Bly

HELLO
I AM AN...

EXPERT!

I recently related the central idea of a terrific book, *The Death of Expertise* (Oxford University Press, 2017), by Tom Nichols, on my blog as follows:

"In our culture today, we not only don't trust our experts, but openly argue with, ignore, defy them, and at times even treat them with outright contempt."

Though I also noted that, despite the growing disdain for experts in certain fields in some quarters, there are still many who flock to experts for guidance and advice.

Therefore, becoming an expert — that is, ideally (a) a true expert who really does know his stuff and (b) is also recognized as such by his industry or field — can be a big boost to your career and your business.

Reason: recognized experts or "gurus" are more in demand, have an easier time getting clients, earn more money, and sell more of their products and services.

But how do you become a genuine, recognized expert in your specialty — and gain the kudos, prestige, and financial rewards that go with it?

Well, on page 30 of his book, Nichols says there are four requirements needed to truly become a genuine expert in your field:

1. Education — What he really means is knowledge gained through study.

Broadly, to be a genuine expert requires deep understanding of your subject, and part of the way to gain expertise that is through diligent, persistent, and careful study.

As an autodidact, you can study on your own. All experts I know do.

But obtaining some of the knowledge by getting a degree in your field, especially from a prestigious university, can also be a plus — and in some fields, like physics and medicine, is requisite.

And in many other fields as well, not only does a formal education accelerate your learning, but people tend to take you more seriously when you have your degree or certifications.

2. Talent — People are typically talented in a discipline through some combination of training, practice, and natural aptitude.

3. Experience — Malcom Gladwell, Mark Ford, and others have said that to become good at something you have to do it for a thousand hours — and to become a master, you have to do it for around 10,000 hours.

4. Peer and public affirmation — It usually takes both achievement and recognition by both one's peers and the general public to be considered an expert.

Examples include movie directors being recognized with an Oscar, musicians with a Grammy, scientists with a Nobel Prize, and journalists with a Pulitzer.

Of course, those are at the top of the game, and multiple lesser prizes and publicity can also help you achieve expert status — everything from giving a talk at your local library to writing an article for your industry trade journal.

Do you have any questions about gaining expertise in copywriting? Let us know in the comments below so we can help.

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1 Response to "How to Become a Genuine, Recognized Expert in Your Field"

I would add another element to the 4 listed - Confidence. Although the sum of the 4 might just equal Confidence. I know many who have all the above- in different fields- but are still reluctant to "pull the guru or expert" card. Thanks for the discussion- I'm gaining in all 4 all the time.

Patricia Moyer – over a year ago

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