

Expert Envy

Experts have become omnipresent. They're everywhere: on your favorite television show, on drive time radio programming, on blogs and internet discussion forums, between the pages of nationally popular magazines and your local newspaper. You can't throw a dart; it seems, without having it hit an Expert on the way to the dartboard.

Why is this happening? What has motivated all of these people -- financial planners and attorneys, floral designers and wedding planners, massage therapists and ear, nose and throat specialists -- to take on the Expert mantle?

One reason:

Being the Expert is one of the most efficient, effective ways to ensure your professional and financial success.

This trend is consumer driven. According to Chris Anderson, author of *The Long Tail*, consumers increasingly demand that services and products be targeted directly to them. There's a cycle of specialization at work, resulting in a public that wants experts for everything.

There are many reasons for this, most of which can be traced directly to media and communication outlets. The Internet is perhaps the most pervasive proponent of specialization. In Anderson's *The Long Tail*, he says that "In an era without the constraints of physical shelf space and other bottlenecks of distribution, narrowly targeted goods and services can be as economically attractive as mainstream fare." You can see this in action at mega-sites like Amazon.com that go out of their way to offer personalized 'want lists', 'recommended titles', and specialized deals based on previous purchases.

At the same time, there has been an explosion of cable and satellite television networks, each targeted to an increasingly narrow demographic. Where once there was a Home and Garden channel, there are now Fine Living, Do It Yourself, and Home Discovery networks, with rumors of more 'shelter' channels on the horizon. The trend is more pronounced in print media. 'One size fits all' magazines such as Reader's Digest are still on the newsstand, but they're being crowded out by specialty titles like *Quick Quilts*, *The Italian Greyhound Magazine*, and *Sci-Fi* -- a title devoted to those who watch shows on the popular Sci Fi Channel. Satellite radio shows are a new trend, with offerings for fans of Howard Stern and Oprah Winfrey.

The public fed a steady diet of Experts via the media, demands Experts for their own lives. After all, they've been told consistently that this is how things are supposed to work. At the same time, the public has demonstrated a willingness to pay a premium for expertise. Well-known Experts, no matter what field they're in, command top dollar for their products and services. There are home decorating experts who make more money than the average neuro-surgeon, simply by capitalizing on their Expert status.



How do they do it?

Why does one financial planner labor in obscurity while another pontificate for Barrons? How do TV news producers know which attorney to call for insightful legal commentary when the events of the day merit it? What determines who shows up as a guest blogger or speaker at industry conventions?

While it's obvious to see the benefits inherent in Being the Expert, it's not always clear how one comes to be recognized as the Expert. This can lead to a condition known as Expert Envy, especially when you know that you're as skilled, as talented, and as dynamic as the person staring at you from the TV screen.

Why are they in this position, enjoying the heightened visibility, greater profitability, and enhanced reputation, when you're not?

It's not mere chance. It's not good fortune, a lucky roll of the dice, or being born into a family of media moguls -- although all of those help! Experts aren't born...they're made.

Curing Expert Envy

The first step in eliminating expert envy is realizing that Experts are made. Logically, the next step is the realization that if the Experts you see surrounding you were created, then you can go through the same creative process: You can Be the Expert. In my book, *Riches in Niches: Making it BIG in a Small Market* (Career Press, May 2007), I discuss how you can achieve Expert status by becoming a Nichepreneur™.

A Nichepreneur™ uses their professional skills and experiences, coupled with personal passions, to serve a narrowly defined target market. Shrewd use of promotional tools, from media management to industry networking, help position the Nichepreneur™ as an Expert -- with all the benefits that entails. Voila! No longer are you envying that television pundit or industry guru -- for you will be that person yourself.

There are four key reasons why you should consider becoming a Nichepreneur™. These four reasons all have one thing in common: They all will help you achieve your business goals and objectives in the most effective, efficient way possible. Whether you want to become wealthier, gain the respect of your colleagues and peers, some degree of fame, or to simply have a little bit more of the success you have right now, becoming a Nichepreneur™ can help you along the way.