

10 TIPS



Small Business
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FOR BECOMING KNOWN AS AN INDUSTRY EXPERT



California Small Business
Development Center
Network

You've got questions.
We've got answers.

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Developing a reputation as an expert in your industry can raise your business's profile; help you attract customers, partners and employees; and even enable you to charge more for your products and services. You're already an expert in what you do—and spreading the word about that expertise is easier than you might think. Here are 10 tips to get you started.

1. **Give a speech.** Find organizations that your target customers belong to—whether the local marathon runners' training group, PTA or Rotary club—and offer to speak at their meetings. Create a relevant handout to leave behind, and bring business cards and brochures, too.
2. **Start a blog.** Adding a blog to your business website is a smart tactic for companies that provide information and expertise, such as accounting or consulting firms. Blog about industry news, timely advice for your customers, or new developments in your business.
3. **Comment on other blogs.** If you don't have the time or skill to blog, build your reputation by commenting on your industry's leading blogs. Make sure your comments are thoughtful and add to the conversation. Don't be overly promotional, but do include your name and business name.
4. **Use Twitter.** Use Twitter not just to promote your business, but also to share interesting links and retweet useful information. Focus on quality, not quantity. By consistently sharing good information, you'll build a reputation as a knowledgeable source.
5. **Get LinkedIn.** If you own a business-to-business company, LinkedIn Groups and Answers are great ways to share your expertise. Join Groups related to your industry and participate in discussions. Look for LinkedIn Questions related to your business and answer them.
6. **Write articles.** Blogs and online publications are influential, but print media still carries more weight with most people. Contact trade publications and local newspapers and ask if you can contribute articles related to your industry, or even write a regular column.
7. **Become a trusted source.** Being quoted in print or online cements your reputation as an expert. Seek out journalists who cover your industry, then make yourself a resource by commenting on their articles and sending them information related to their "beat"...and your business.
8. **Lead the way.** To become an industry expert, you've got to be active in your industry. But don't just attend industry events and conferences—take a leadership role by offering to head committees, speak at events or develop programs.
9. **Network.** Be an active networker, both online and offline. Focus not on what you can gain, but on how you can help others by connecting them and sharing valuable information. People will come to view you as a reliable and trustworthy resource.
10. **Get involved in your community.** Keep a high profile in your community by participating in local events. For instance, if you own a health club, you could sponsor a fitness fair or get a booth. The more active you are in your community, the more business will come your way.

By Rieva Lesonsky

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