

Are you a Key Player in your Industry?

By Martin Murphy

There are certain people in every industry that seem to attract more opportunities and wealth. It's such a major phenomenon that branding expert Daniel Priestley wrote a book about becoming such a person, who he refers to as being a '*key person of influence*'. Daniel's business now operates globally, using the same principles, so it obviously worked for him and his partners.

It's a great book and I often point clients towards it as a reference for strategies, because being regarded as a key player or an influential person is beneficial for the success and growth of your business.

So which strategies are the best?

That all depends on the psychological makeup of your target market or client that you want to attract. You might want to have a blend of all the areas mentioned below, so that you cover the rich complexity of human needs. Because that's what it is all about. Human needs. People are an infinite blend of environmental, ecological, behavioural and cognitive intelligences which all require certain things to feel satisfied and at ease before and after a purchase.

People with a strong leaning towards environmental intelligence are often creative, communicative and fashionable. They will often have their finger on the pulse of the latest trends.

Ecological intelligence is about relationships and people who use this preference will often ask those closest to them for advice before making a decision.

Behavioural intelligence drives people to get the job done now. They're often status driven and achievement focussed.

Cognitive intelligence are detailed orientated with a penchant for spending time researching products that interests them before buying them, usually preferring tried and tested quality over quantity.

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So to become a key player in your industry, you've really got to focus on enhancing these key aspects in your marketing:

Social Proof

Social proof, also known as informational social influence, appeals to people because it takes the uncertainty out of the decision making process by showing potential clients that other people, just like them, have bought your product. It is especially effective if the person validating your product or service is a close friend or somebody they respect.

Testimonials on your website are good, especially if accompanied by a photograph, referrals are even better.

How can you improve your level of social influence?

Authority

Some people are more influenced by status or authority for two reasons. One is, like the social proof aspect, it makes your marketing believable and there is also a *credibility transfer* effect.

People who are hungry for success, want to work with people who are themselves successful or uniquely admirable. Displaying your skills, success or authority is a strong tool for boosting your credibility and influencing potential clients who themselves are hungry for more success. Writing a book is a great start to boosting your authority. Failing that, try having your picture taken on Necker island with Richard Branson.

Value

Some people prefer to stick to what they know is valuable and will often utilise services and buy products that prove their premium value over time.

If a client prefers to purchase premium products, then proving that your product or service is highly valuable, unique and scarce, makes it easier for them to say "yes" to you.

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Kevin Maney, author of *'Trade off; Why Some Things Catch On, and Others Don't'*, refers to two value characteristics of services or products; convenience and high-fidelity:

- Convenience means quick, reliable and flexible
- High-fidelity means high aesthetic appeal, high emotional impact. And a high degree of social status.

Rolls Royce utilise scents in their cars by impregnating the smells of mahogany wood, leather and oil into their car's interior. This is a way for them to prove their high worth, as does the calibre of their brochures which position their cars next to luxurious yachts in exotic locations.

Unless you're selling a lot of units cheaply, utilising the premium appeal in your offering is going to help you attract more of your type of buyer.

You're the go to person right now

Once you become the *'go to person'* in your niche, then you're going to enjoy the benefits of the *'Halo effect'* which means anything you touch seemingly *'appears'* as gold. If important people ask you to their events, then you must be important too, is how potential clients will see it.

This Midas touch, psychologists have determined, happens because we will judge a person's opinion of a product or service based on our overall opinion of them. Brand ambassadors are great and they don't have to be world famous, just relevant to your niche, believable and enthusiastic about you or your product.

As mentioned earlier, having a blend of all the above will help you appeal to people in your niche, especially if you focus on the biggest preference of your chosen audience.

There are a couple of other characteristics which are also very helpful when it comes to raising your audiences' interest.

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You're on a mission

If you can communicate the story of where you're going and make that story exciting and a little intimidating, this will appeal to potential clients too. Having a grand mission certainly helped Richard Branson in the past and Elon Musk, owner of Tesla Motors, today. Both are familiar with taking on big challenges and are very capable at telling the world about it.

Branson took on the big incumbents in the airline industry and later flew his balloon in a record breaking attempt across the Atlantic. Elon Musk, the innovative co-founder of Paypal and CEO of Solar City, Tesla and SpaceX, is attempting to transform humanity's lot by making '*life multiplanetary*'.

As legendary early investor John Doerr believes, there are two types of entrepreneurs; missionaries and mercenaries. The ones he likes to invest in and work with, are the missionaries. They're trying to achieve something extraordinary and that grand mission is very attractive to potential clients.

Contributing to the development of a community

We're moving towards a world which needs to become more connected, collaborative and community focussed. If your organisation can help others in your community grow it will make you a key player in your industry. In a counter intuitive move, collaborating with others, even your competitors, makes you appear a more capable and confident as a leader. And that's attractive.

This is more than doing a charity run. This is about seriously using the skills and potential within your business to leverage some benefit for the community you operate in and inhabit.

So what could you do to make you a more attractive proposition and position yourself as a *key player in your industry*?