



Ep 2: Industry Thought Leader: 5 Common Barriers that'll keep you stuck from Becoming known as an Authority in your field

Hi, it's Annemarie Cross – The Podcasting Queen and welcome back. This is episode 2 of a special podcast series that is focusing on how to become known as an authority in your field - an Industry Thought Leader.

If you haven't had the opportunity to listen to episode 1 where I spoke about **5 Key Foundations to Stand Out From the Crowd and Being Seen as an Authority in your field** go to: www.AnnemarieCross.com/podcastseries that's AnnemarieCross.com/podcastseries. There's also a number of resources I've included in this series as you continue to build your Thought Leadership.

In this Episode 2, I'll be speaking about the **5 Common Barriers that'll keep you stuck from becoming known as an Authority in your field**.

In Episode 3: I'll be speaking about **The System, Program & Process that'll enable you to turn increased influence and impact into significant income**.

And I have a Bonus episode, where I'll be sharing **3 KEY Strategies to Cut Through the Noise and Nurture prospects into paying customers with Your Thought Leader Podcast Series**.

Let's dive in to today's topic: 5 Common Barriers that'll keep you stuck from Becoming known as an Authority in your field.

Here's a list of what they are and then I'm going to dive a little deeper into each.

- barrier number 1 is Lack of Clarity and Certainty
- barrier number 2 is Lack of Focus and Consistency
- barrier number 3 is Comparison Syndrome
- barrier number 4 is Imposter Syndrome and
- barrier number 5 is Tall Poppy Syndrome

Let's dive a little deeper into the first common barrier – lack of clarity and certainty

When you have a lack of clarity about your message, what you stand for, and what impact you want to make in the world, and the area around where you want to build your Thought Leadership that lack of clarity and certainty will keep you stuck.

Here's what typically happens when you lack clarity and certainty, especially when it comes to sharing your message and building a strong voice in your area of expertise.

What happens when you lack clarity and certainty:
You try to emulate what other successful people are doing

I recently tweeted: “Want to build a strong brand? Authenticity and integrity are vital. Don’t try to be something you’re not. It’ll show.”

Remember – when I refer to the word ‘brand’, I’m referring to your reputation and what other people instantly think about when your name is mentioned.

To put this into context, picture this.

One of your competitors has a charismatic, yet controversial style and is known for dropping a few colourful words when voicing her opinion.

She’s all about shaking things up and destroying the status quo. If she doesn’t like something, she’ll tell you so in her usual powerful and edgy manner.

[Note: These are all qualities and characteristics of the Maverick Archetype from the Branding with Archetypes system I use when working with solopreneurs who are going through the branding process].

She has a large following on her social media networks who love her work and her business is thriving. Seeing all of her success and achievements, you try to emulate these qualities and approach in your business.

But guess what?

It’s exhausting; it feels awkward; and despite your efforts, you’re just not attracting anywhere near the results you had hoped for. In fact, you’re still the world’s best-kept secret, and you’re feeling miserable and frustrated.

No wonder.

Trying to be someone you’re not takes an enormous amount of energy.

And, more importantly, it’s not the ‘real you’ that’s showing up in your business so of course it feels unnatural and awkward.

I asked the question in my article: “Personal Branding – is authenticity really important?” Yes! Authenticity is crucial – especially when it comes to your brand.



That's why when taking my clients through Signature Brand Programs, I ask them over 50 insightful questions about themselves to uncover their unique gifts, traits, characteristics, likes and dislikes.

Nothing speaks louder and more powerful than when you give yourself permission show up as 'you' in your business, so take the time you need, get the support you need to help you get that clarity and certainty so you know exactly what it is you are making a stand for, the key message you want to share, AND the area you want to become known as an authority – that Industry Thought Leader in.

What happens when you lack clarity and certainty:
You listen to the advice of others

Despite their best of intentions to provide you with sound branding advice and how to distinguish your services from all of your competitors, it's impossible for anyone to truly understand your vision, your values and core beliefs. These are the things that you stand for – it's the core of who you are and one of the many aspects you should identify as you work through the branding process.

I've been a Personal Branding Strategist for well over two decades and have helped numerous clients over that time define and build a distinctive, Signature Brands.

However, in all those years, never have I told a client what they should be doing with their brand, how they should act, what they should say, or what their brand attributes/strengths, their brand voice, or their brand story should be.

Going through the branding process should involve clarifying essential information about 'you' and what is unique about 'your' brand, not what I (or anyone else for that matter) believe you should be.

My own values and beliefs can cloud a client's true essence, which is why I'll never tell someone what they should be.

Rather, I'll ask the right questions and present them with the right tools to help them clarify information that will eventually become part of their own influential Signature Brand.

So, when working on identifying key elements for your brand, make sure that whatever you incorporate into your brand is uniquely you and resonates with who you are and what you stand for. Not what someone else has told you how to be.



What happens when you lack clarity and certainty:

You work on all of your external brand touch points but not the core elements of your brand

The brand process MUST start with you.

The core of your brand MUST reflect vital elements such as your mission, your values and your purpose. Your unique characteristics and key factors that drive you forward with immense passion and why you have chosen the work you do with your clients will influence your Signature Brand and how you will continue to show up in the world.

As Jim Signorelli outlines in his Story Branding videos, the branding process should start with identifying the inner layers of your brand. It's the 'why' you do what you do. "It's the cause that you're trying to promote."

Once you have identified these core elements, then you can start to work on the outer layers of your brand such as your logo, brochures, designs and other brand touch points.

Start with the core elements of your brand first and then move onto the outer layers of your brand.

For me, taking the time to work on all these areas made a significant difference in my business. Having a distinctive Signature Brand has enabled me to get immense clarity and focus and subsequently:

1. Position myself as an expert
2. Charge a higher fee due to increased perceived value
3. Create a powerful, clear and consistent message
4. Attract my ideal client
5. Create a unique brand that is difficult to copy

And, by defining and building a distinctive Signature Brand – you can achieve these things too.



Let's dive a little deeper into the second common barrier – lack of focus and consistency

To build authority and your reputation as an Industry Thought Leader it takes time, and requires focus and consistency, however when you try to rush the process or you lack focus on that niche so you can prevent yourself from being seen as an authority in your field.

Article on Forbes:

“They lack the appropriate expertise” What these firms need to do is focus on those areas where they are strong and there are indeed niches where they are expert.”

Don't spent the time researching, or through self doubt (or lack of self worth and understanding) they can't see where they gifts/talents/expertise.

What will often happen is you become known as a: Jack-of-all-trades, and a master of none. A saying I'm sure you are familiar with.

As an example, you may be a Coach and one day you're speaking about Life Coaching and helping people find out their purpose in life. The next time you share your message you're talking about helping people loose weight. The next time you speak about helping people build their self-confidence. I'm sure you've seen this happen before.

Their message and their actions are not focused and not consistent.

So how do you ensure you are focused and consistent in who you are and the information you continue to share so that you become known as an Authority in your field. That Industry Thought Leader that your ideal client feels compelled to work with you when they're ready to make a decision.

Firstly, as mentioned in episode 1 of this series you need to be very clear about who you are, your message, what you stand for, and your niche.

And then by ensuring you incorporate your Signature Brand and message in everything you do. Go back and listen to episode 1 where I share what you do have to focus on.

Everything you do and say 'speaks' your brand and will build your reputation. Are you sending a consistent message that resonates with your ideal client?



And, you need to be showing up and sharing your message, consistently. Daily. And, there are ways you can show up daily by repurposing your content and having a team support you.

Here are some other areas where you can exude your brand voice:

- Tweets
- Program Titles
- Facebook Lives
- Articles
- Blog Posts
- Emails
- Slogan / Tagline
- Your introduction and bio
- Your domain name
- Your company name
- Your videos and audios

Ensuring your brand voice and message is showing up in ALL of your communications will help you build a level of credibility and hireability so that when your ideal client is ready to move forward, YOU are the person they'll want to work with.

Here's to building an influential brand voice and message that connects with your ideal client.

Let's dive a little deeper into the common barrier – comparison syndrome

Yes, other people may be speaking about the same thing as you, however despite this you can still become seen as an authority IF you continue to provide value in the content you share specifically for your ideal client, you're clear on your brand.

Have you ever looked at what someone else was doing in her business and felt envious?

She's magnetic; the information she shares is always spot-on; and the level of engagement on her blog and social media platforms is something you've dreamed about for as long as you can remember?

Go on – be honest!

I know I have. Especially when I was just starting out in my career business.

I had no idea about branding and the key foundations I had to put into place in order to build my own unique space in the market. And here were all these amazing women making a real mark in the industry and generating amazing results – even though they had similar qualifications and offered similar services as me?

How did they do it?

What were they doing that I wasn't?

Thankfully, I put those unhelpful feelings aside and invested in a business coach/mentor for ongoing professional development.

My coach helped keep me focused on MY goals and looking forward to my goals and dreams, rather than constantly looking sideways and getting distracted by what other people were doing.

And before long, I had built a strong reputation in the industry, had won several international awards, and had other consultants (who were new to the industry) contacting me for advice and support.

Guess what?

Whether you believe it or not, YOU can experience this too.

You too can build a level of credibility and celebrity within your industry and become known as the 'go-to' person if you have the right foundations in place and keep focused on your goals.

The only person that's stopping you from achieving this – is you.

Especially when you're constantly comparing yourself to what other people are doing and not focused and working on the right activities in your business.

Constant comparison to other people will keep you stuck.

I'm not talking about the comparison you do when doing market research as part of business planning and distinguishing yourself in the market place.

I'm talking about the continuous visits to their website, their Facebook Business Page or blog, scanning their newsletters, reading their Twitter posts, and watching the conversation they're having with their community and thinking "I'll never be as good as she is."

This type of comparison is exhausting and soul destroying and can cripple your business's growth.

Why?

Because it stops you from working on the important things in your business that will help drive you forward.

What should you be focusing on? The Core Business Foundations and everything I'm sharing in this podcast series?

When you work on getting these key foundations in place in your business – you too will build an influential presence; will continue to create and share content that you know your ideal client will love; and you'll continue to build a powerful unique and distinguished presence in the market place that will continue to attract the attention of your ideal client.

It's all up to you and what you decide to focus on.

Let's dive a little deeper into the common barrier – Imposter Syndrome

According to Wikipedia: Impostor syndrome (also known as **impostor** phenomenon, imposterism, fraud **syndrome** or the **impostor** experience) is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud".

Studies have shown up to 70% of people have experienced imposter syndrome, so you're not alone.

In an article on Psychology Today written by Dr Denise Cummins

"The tell tale sign of impostor syndrome is a disconnect between perceived and actual performance. "Impostors" have ample objective evidence that they are doing well—good performance reports, promotion history, grades, etc. Yet they feel that

somehow they've been faking it or skating along on thin ice. Any minute now, they are going to be unmasked and revealed to be a fraud.

Impostor syndrome has been studied by researchers for over three decades. One striking characteristic of the syndrome is that, although impostors crave acknowledgement and praise for their accomplishments, they do not feel comfortable when they receive it. Instead, praise makes them feel anxious because they secretly feel they do not deserve it. After all, they think, I'm just faking it—unlike everyone else here who seems to know what they're doing.”

[I'll leave a link to the article in the transcript so you can read it for yourself. It has some interesting and helpful information].

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/good-thinking/201310/do-you-feel-impostor>

This is something I wrote and shared a while ago, which I hope you'll find helpful if you're struggling with Imposter Syndrome.

I was asked to present a keynote at a Business Women's conference about how to build your Thought Leadership with a podcast.

A few minutes into my presentation I asked each person to answer honestly if they felt a little uncomfortable when they thought of themselves as a Thought Leader.

Almost everyone put up their hands. Which surprised me.

Because most of these women had also been invited to speak, therefore each must have been recognised for the value they would deliver by the event coordinator. And, I knew who they were, with each delivering real value to their community. And, those women who had already spoken, had provided incredible value to me and everyone else who was attending the conference.

Yet, they all admitted they struggled with the same thing.

They doubted they were worthy of building their reputation as a Thought Leader in their industry.

It reminded me of something I shared a while ago, which is worth sharing again.

“Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will.”

Which, sadly, I believe is so true.

Because it can lead us to question:

- Whether our skills and strengths are enough;
- Whether we have what it takes to be successful;
- Whether people will be interested in what we have to say;
- Whether people will criticise and judge us when we dare to share our message...or
- [You fill in the blank].

But, here's the thing.

Doubt is a LIAR.

And, can ONLY kill your dream IF you let it.

So, don't let it.

The next time the seed of doubt (or Imposter Syndrome) raises its ugly head, tell it to STOP.

- You CAN do this.
- You DO have the skills and strengths.
- Your ideal client wants and needs to hear your message.

And, while it may take you a little longer than you had hoped it would, you WILL achieve your dreams of impacting the world with your message, IF you go out and share it.

So, remind yourself of everything you have been through, the courses you've attended, the experience you've gained, the knowledge you've gained, the people (and clients) you've helped, and the challenges you've had to battle through to get you to where you are now. THAT is what gives you the absolute authority to stand with integrity to share your message.

Because your ideal client needs to hear you.

Now go do! Yes?

Let's dive a little deeper into the common barrier – Tall Poppy Syndrome

For those of you who may not be familiar with this saying, Wikipedia describes the tall poppy syndrome as: “a social phenomenon in which people of genuine merit are resented, attacked, cut down, or criticised because their talents or achievements elevate them above or distinguish them from their peers”.

As you continue to grow your business and increase your credibility and reputation within your field, not only will you capture the attention of your potential prospect/clients – you'll also be noticed by your competitors and other people in your circle.

And, unfortunately, some of these people may not always have your best interests at heart. In fact, you may find that they try to hinder your progress through a direct attack on you personally and your work, or they'll try to drag you down with their critical (naysayer) comments and/or actions.

I'm not talking about constructive criticism where someone is trying to offer you advice with good intentions because they want to see you grow and prosper. I'm referring to the vindictive comments that are coming from a place of 'do or die competitiveness' or out of spite and envy with the sole intent on tarnishing your credibility or keeping you down.

In preparing for this article, I reached out to my social network and asked whether any of them had been a victim of the tall poppy syndrome. Sadly, many people could relate to this.

One woman found herself without a job after she had exposed several things to upper management that needed to be brought to their attention. Apparently her supervisor didn't appreciate her new rise to fame and quickly saw to it that she was removed.

A few years later she opened her own business and was frequently told by people in her community that she'd never achieve the goals that she had set for herself.

So, if like this woman, you too have someone who is going out of their way to 'attack, cut down or criticise you' – what do you do? Should you come out fighting? Should you retaliate and serve them back some of their medicine? You know – tit for tat? Or do you just simply ignore them and hope they'll go away?

Whatever you decide, I believe it's important to hold true to your integrity and honour so that you can continue to hold your head up high.

Here are 3 tips to consider if ever you find yourself at the receiving end of the ‘tall poppy syndrome’.

1. Don't stoop to their level

I think the most important thing to do is to avoid retaliation where you come out fighting and throwing negative comments back at them.

Stooping to their level and ‘serving them up a spoonful of their own medicine’ will only serve to take your attention, energy and focus away from what you SHOULD be focusing on – which is to continue the great work that you’re doing.

Here’s an Action Step for you: Don’t get caught up in anger, frustration or retaliation – you’re worth so much more! Rather let your light shine brightly and continue to bring your message to the world, so that you can carry on helping the people who you know you are meant to serve.

2. Realise – it's NOT about you

It’s important to realise that their remarks have nothing to do with you and the work you are doing, but rather EVERYTHING to do with them and their inability to achieve their own successes.

It’s THEIR stuff – their own issues and lack of self-worth and/or self-belief – and has nothing to do with you!

Here’s an Action Step to help you: Remind yourself of your mission and purpose and the people you are here to serve. Listening to the naysayers and critics will only delay you from achieving your bigger mission. Move on.

3. Surround yourself with supportive people

Do you feel physically and emotionally drained after being in someone’s company where you have listened to their negative remarks? Being in the company of these naysayers and critics WILL impact your outcomes.

Are the people you associate with constantly telling you why something can’t be done, or why your plans are impossible to achieve? Perhaps that’s true for them. However are you going to let this person’s inability to reach their goals affect your ability to reach yours? I certainly hope not!



Here's an Action Step for you: Surround yourself with supportive people – people who will continue to encourage you to be the best you can be and who will celebrate alongside you as you continue to move from success to success.

The important thing to remember is to hold true to who you are and the work you do; keep your eyes firmly fixed on your goals; and to build a community of like-minded people who will continue to inspire and uplift you on your journey.

Well, that brings us to the end of episode 2.

I can't wait to share more in episode three, **The System, Program & Process that'll enable you to turn increased influence and impact into significant income.**

Remember you can access the entire podcast series along with the 'Are You Ready to Launch Your Thought Leader Podcast Quiz and other resources I've added there for you, at: www.AnnemarieCross.com/PodcastSeries that's AnnemarieCross.com/PodcastSeries