

Ep 1: "Industry Thought Leader: 5 Key Foundations to Stand Out From the Crowd and Being Seen as an Authority in your field"

Hi, it's Annemarie Cross – The Podcasting Queen.

I'm so excited to launch my latest podcast – Industry Thought Leader for Change Makers who want to impact the world with their message, while build their visibility and reach and ultimately their business.

If you're like many of the Change Makers I speak to, they've got a wealth of information and experience, they've had great results with the clients they worked with, yet they feel they're invisible – the world's best kept secret.

If that sounds like you then this show is specifically for you.

I've created a special 3-part podcast series as well as a bonus episode.

Episode 1: where I'll be sharing 5 Key Foundations to Stand Out From the Crowd and Being Seen as an Authority in your field.

Episode 2: 5 Common Barriers that'll keep you stuck from becoming known as an Authority in your field

Episode 3: The System, Program & Process that'll enable you to turn increased influence and impact into significant income

Bonus episode: From Podcast Listener into Lead: 3 KEY Strategies to Cut Through the Noise and Nurture prospects into paying customers with Your Thought Leader Podcast Series.

You can get access to this entire series and additional resources over at: www.annemariecross.com/podcastseries

Then in upcoming episodes I'll be speaking to other experts and industry thought leaders who will be sharing their own journey to becoming that influential voice in their industry, while also aspects of thier expertise to help you build your business and your reputation as authority in your field. That Industry Thought Leader.

Go ahead and access the podcast series over at www.annmariecross.com/podcastseries and remember to subscribe to the show – it's free of course, to ensure you don't miss out on future episodes.



Hi, it's Annemarie Cross – The Podcasting Queen and welcome.

The fact that you're here tells me three things:

- You have a desire to take your influence, impact and income to a MUCH greater level.
- You have a body of knowledge and experience that has been developed over a number of years and you've supported clients in making transformational changes in their lives and/or businesses.

If any of these sounds like you – welcome friend! You are in the right place!

This is episode 1 of my 3-Part Series: How to become known as an Authority in your field – that recognised Industry Thought Leader.

I created this series after having so many conversations with Change Makers, just like you, who wanted to impact the world with their message, and who had a desire to become known as an authority in their field – that Industry Thought Leader, however despite all of their knowledge and experience – they struggled to stand out from all of the noise and clutter.

While they've had great results with the clients they've worked with already, and they have worked hard to get to where they are now, they are no-where near where they want to be, or think they should be.

If you can relate, this podcast series is going to be invaluable.

As you're listening, be mindful that some of the things I'll be sharing, you have in place already, which is great. I do encourage you to continue listening, because there may be a few little tweaks here and there that you need to do in order to really take it to the next level.

And, there may be things you realise you haven't really worked on before. Fantastic – let's get you into action working on that, so that you can really take what you're doing, your message, your influence, impact AND business results to where you want it to be.

You ready?

This podcast series includes three episodes, including a bonus episode, which is:



This episode, which is episode 1: where I'll be sharing 5 Key Foundations to Stand Out From the Crowd and Being Seen as an Authority in your field." By the way, this episode being the first and laying the foundations will be slightly longer than the rest of the episodes. I do encourage you to listen to the whole episode as it lays some critical foundations in your business too and is often the reason why many experts never really reach that Industry Thought Leader recognition, or are they able to grow their businesses to a level they would have hoped, or could have achieved.

Episode 2: 5 Common Barriers that'll keep you stuck from becoming known as an Authority in your field

Episode 3: The System, Program & Process that'll enable you to turn increased influence and impact into significant income

Bonus episode: From Podcast Listener into Lead: 3 KEY Strategies to Cut Through the Noise and Nurture prospects into paying customers with Your Thought Leader Podcast Series.

If we haven't had the opportunity to meet yet, I'm so pleased you are joining me. It's means a lot as you are choosing to spend this time with me, and I don't take that forgranted, so I am committed to share everything I've learned over the years so that you can begin to position yourself as that Industry Thought Leader.

A little about my background:

I've spent over two decades working as a strategist in personal branding, marketing and communications, initially in the career industry, working with Executives and Professionals helping them get noticed, hired and paid what they're worth, and later within the business world, supporting coaches and consultants, helping them get noticed, booked and paid what they're worth.

Over the last few years, I've pivoted my business and now support Change Makers and aspiring Thought Leaders take their message to the world with their own podcast and/or podcast series.

It's the practices and processes that I'll be sharing today that have enabled me to become known as a Thought Leader across both those industries. In the career industry and now being recognised as the Podcasting Queen.

In fact, I started my very first co-hosted podcast in 2008 while I was still working in the career industry to be the voice of inspiration and hope amongst the deluge of 'doom and gloom' after the GFC devastated families worldwide.



Since 2008 I have hosted and produced over dozens of podcasts and podcasts series, have interviewed 1,000s of guests from diverse backgrounds, won Best Podcast Awards, with my podcasts regularly being included in the top business podcasts globally and it's this experience that has seen me become recognised as an industry pioneer and being dubbed The Podcasting Queen, something I had to get used to, but now embrace.

Over a decade on, I've recently author another book: Industry Thought Leader: How To Go from Invisible to Influential (and Profitable) with a Podcast and I love being able to be the voice of inspiration, while support Change Makers become known as Industry Thought Leaders.

If we were sitting across the table and I asked you, what some of your struggles and challenges were, if your response included that you were struggling to:

- Be seen and heard from all of the noise and clutter;
- That despite all of your experience and knowledge in your industry and the clients you've been working with.

However, you still feel like the world's best-kept secret.

And, you don't know why or what you're doing wrong, because, while you've been following everyone's advice; building connections, joining in conversations, sharing content across social media platforms and posting as often as you can, none of it has generated the visibility or number of new clients you had hoped for.

However, the thought of ramping up what you're already doing to generate more exposure, leads and ultimately high paying customers is overwhelming because you're busy enough as it is.

If this sounds like you – you are not alone.

There are a number of factors that are causing this, and are the reason why now it's even more important for you to implement what I'm about to share with you in this series.

The first reason why you're struggling is:

- Reason 1: MARKET SATURATION & FRAGMENTATION:
- Reason 2: YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS EXPECTATIONS (AND BUYING JOURNEY) HAVE CHANGED:
- Reason 3: YOUR IDEAL CLIENT IS LESS TRUSTING

Let's briefly look at these three reasons.



Reason 1: MARKET SATURATION & FRAGMENTATION:

 Market Saturation: customers have far more choices now than they know how to deal with.

"People are busy, overwhelmed with information, and time is limited for all.

Companies are going to need to find a unique way to stand out in order to share [that] what they have to offer is a product (or service) a person needs."

– Jenny Kile, CEO – Kardtects

- Business News Daily: "The Biggest Challenge for CEO's in 2017"
 - Market Fragmentation:

"Emergence of new segments (in a previously homogeneous market), which have their own distinct needs, requirements and preferences. These fragments reduce the effectiveness of mass marketing techniques and erode brand loyalty."

[Online Dictionary]

We've heard marketers say how important it is to keep the content NATIVE to the platform you're posting on, which means when you create ONE post and share it across all platforms without tweaking the content to suit that specific platform, you won't make the impact you want.

This is very true when it comes to podcasting. Creating a Facebook Live, or any video for that matter and stripping the audio and posting it as a podcast, won't have the same impact AND results as creating a podcast that was specifically created for a podcast audience.

Taking a webinar and stripping the audio from it and posting that as a podcast, won't have the same impact AND results than if you were to create a podcast that was specifically created for your podcast audience.

There are certainly ways to repurpose certain content, however there needs to be strategy and intention in how you pre-frame that content and share it with your podcast audience.

So, as an aspiring Thought Leader who wants to become known as an Authority in your field, be mindful that creating one piece of content and blasting it across all of your social media platforms, without consideration of the audience and their expectations on that specific platform, isn't going to have the same impact it once may have. And that's because of Market Fragmentation.



Reason 2: YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS EXPECTATIONS (AND BUYING JOURNEY) HAVE CHANGED:



Reason 3: YOUR IDEAL CLIENT IS LESS TRUSTING

We've all heard of the importance of building: 'know, like and trust' with our potential customers, especially of we want our ideal client to do business with us.

Edelman is a global communications marketing firm that have been conducting studies on the topic of TRUST, that is highly respected globally.

They believe that their proven strategy is to engage audiences over time to earn their lasting trust, which they (and I quote):

"believe is the strongest insurance against competitive disruption, the antidote to consumer indifference, and the best path to continued growth."

We all know the importance of building 'know, like and trust' with our audience, however according to recent studies by Edelman, Consumer trust is low, especially when it comes to Business.

I attended a conference and heard Global Futurist, Chris Riddel say:

"We need to reinvent trust."

Sadly, many of the things I see businesses doing both online and offline (some of which I speak about in episode 2 of this podcast series) is NOT building trust – but rather eroding that trust. Their actions, and in some case inactions, continues to diminish trust. I'll speak more about what those are in episode 2.



However for now, how do we address these three reasons I mentioned?

- Reason 1: MARKET SATURATION & FRAGMENTATION:
- Reason 2: YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS EXPECTATIONS (AND BUYING JOURNEY) HAVE CHANGED:
- Reason 3: YOUR IDEAL CLIENT IS LESS TRUSTING

You MUST have these FIVE key foundations in place. In fact, I call these your Core Business Foundations, which you need to have in place in order to **Stand Out From the Crowd and Being Seen as an Authority in your field.**

- 1. A Signature Brand
- 2. Your Lucrative Niche
- 3. Your Signature System
- 4. Your Signature Programs
- 5. Your Digital Assets

In today's episode I'm going to dive deeper into the first two – a Signature Brand and Your Lucrative Niche and then in Episode 3, we'll talk more about your Signature System, your Signature Programs and Your Digital Assets.

Let's speak about some of the Myths, Misconceptions and Mistruths when it comes to building a Signature Brand and having a clearly defined Niche:

Mistake Number 1: It's not important

The first situation was when I was speaking to a Health & Wellness Coach during one of my <u>Business Breakthrough Strategy Sessions</u>. She had been struggling to get more clients for quite some time and was at her wits end.

A few years prior she had invested thousands of dollars with a business coach and internet marketer and had worked closely with them to implement a number of things within her business.

- She now has a website, which looks quite impressive
- She continues to write regular articles
- She has her social media profiles set up and is actively sharing information with a growing community
- She has a range of programs she can offer to suit prospects' needs



- She has been involved in a number of JV opportunities, and through partnering with others,
- She has built a sizable list of subscribers that many coaches would envy

But (and it's a BIG but)... she still isn't getting any new clients.

Why?

In my opinion it's because the business coach and internet marketing guru forgot two MAJOR elements in their work with her, which was now negatively impacting everything she had put into place. They were:

- Understanding her niche market and getting totally clear about her ideal client (including demographics and psychographics)
- Unearthing her 'Inner Brilliance' (her unique attributes, characteristics, core values) and other vital aspects that would help her create a powerful and magnetic Signature Brand

Unfortunately, never once were these two key elements considered as she continued to build her website, her articles and programs/packages etc.

Mistake Number 2: Service Businesses Don't Need to Build a Brand

The second situation was an article titled "Forget Branding" that went on to say that service-based businesses (i.e. coaches. consultants and solopreneurs who were selling their services and expertise) shouldn't bother with building a brand.

The author (a Marketing Specialist) posed the question:

"Can Services Business be Branded?" to which he responded, "In my view services and brands are not related, altho' many practitioners would have you think they are."

Hmm, what can I say other than "what a load of *&^%."

Does he honestly believe that service-based businesses can't and shouldn't build a strong brand? Which planet is he on?

Your 'brand' is your reputation. It's what other people think about when your name is mentioned.



Everything you do and say, how you show up can impact your reputation (i.e. brand), positively and negatively if you're not careful.

Mistake Number 3: Go out and get clients and worry about niching and branding later

The third situation was a business coach who believed it was important to 'build value' and to work with as many clients as possible and then go back and think about niching and branding later.

Sounds wonderful. Unfortunately though, this is often what keeps coaches and consultants stuck.

Let's take a Life Coach for example.

She follows this business coach's advice and offers her coaching services to a diverse clientele with numerous issues. When you read through her website you see that she can help you if you are struggling with your relationships. Oh, you have a problem in your career? She can help you out there too? Did you say you have a phobia of spiders? The steps she follows in her coaching program can help you get over your arachnophobia too – in just one session. Smoking a problem – guess what, this Life Coach can help you give up smoking in 3 simple steps! She can do it all!

I wonder if her business coach has heard of the saying: "Jack of all Trades and a Master of None?"

Personally, if I were struggling with my marriage, I'd want to see a relationship counsellor or an expert who specialised in that area. My marriage is far too important to me.

If I were unhappy in my career, I'd rather go and see a Career Coach who was specifically trained in the area of careers to help me find a job I love. After all, I spend so much of my life at work, I'd want to seek the help of a specialist – not a generalist.

Trying to be all things to all people can often lead to disappointment, exhaustion and frustration. And if your goal is to be build your credibility as a specialist in your field so that you can boost your hireability and get paid what you're worth, being seen as a generalist and a 'jack of all trades' will certainly stop you.



So, when it comes to having a reputable Signature Brand and a clear niche important and relevant?

Yes, Yes YES!!!

I believe these two things are paramount if your goal is to build a reputation as a specialist in your field to get noticed, booked and paid what you're worth.

Understanding and defining your niche will allow you to create programs and packages you know your ideal client will want to invest in. This is because you've spent time listening and observing your ideal client to see what he/she is struggling with.

This information will allow you to better tailor your message to speak directly to their needs. Your brand voice and your message will connect with your ideal client.

And, you can tailor your services and programs as a solution to help them overcome their problems.

Identifying and defining core elements of your brand will ensure you build your credibility and will distinguish yourself in the market place by incorporating your Signature Brand in everything you do. Including:

- Your Brand Voice: the words you use in your articles, flyers and sales pages
- Your Brand Design: the look and feel of brochures, images and fonts
- Your Brand Persona: your mannerisms and your body language
- Your Brand Style: the clothes and accessories you wear

Once you have these key elements in place, not only will you start to attract the attention of your ideal client, you'll also quickly boost your credibility and reputation as a specialist in your field.

Prospects will want to invest in you because of the reputation you've been building and because of the value you offer to your ideal client.

How to:

Firstly – a definition so we're on the same page:

Brand:

A brand is an overall experience of a customer that distinguishes an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of the customer. Brands are used in business,



marketing, and advertising. Name brands are sometimes distinguished from generic or store brands. Wikipedia

"If your business is not a brand, it's just a commodity." Not sure who said that, however I totally believe this.

One of my mentors – Personal Branding Evangelist - William Aruda says:

"What makes you unique makes you successful."

Here are 5 key elements that will support you in building a strong brand:

1. A strong brand is clear on its mission and purpose

A strong brand is clear on its mission and continues to stand up for what it believes in, no matter that. Your conviction (which is motivated by your core values) is at the heart of the work you do and is what continues to drive you forward.

Service-based business owners whose work is aligned with their mission and purpose are extremely passionate about what they are doing and continue to portray this message in all of their communications.

[stop]

Their mission, purpose and passion for their work are unmistakable and are what enables them to make strong connections with their prospects, their clients and the people with whom they continue to network.

For instance, my mission and purpose is to change the world – one message at a time and I do this through my podcasts and helping my clients – other Change Makers impact the world with their message and their own podcasts. That's why I'm committed to helping my clients go from invisible to influential so they can impact the world in a much bigger way with their message.

My mission and purpose determines the content for my blog posts, my podcasts, my videos, and my books. Each message aims to convey inspiration, optimism, excitement, empowerment and triumph. This is very important to me and fuels my desire to be of service to my clients.

- Are you attracting and building meaningful connections?
- Are your communications resonating with people you want to support, who share similar goals and can benefit from investing in you?



 Or are you just creating a list of names and followers of people that have no idea about what you stand for and therefore do not participate, respond to or take action on the advice you offer?

2. A strong brand understands and leverages its uniqueness

As a service-based business owner – to position yourself strongly within your field you should strive to build a reputation as a specialist. To achieve this, it's imperative that you are able to define your strengths, talents and what makes you unique, while also feeling comfortable in positioning yourself as a specialist.

Unfortunately, many service-based business owners fail to truly understand what makes them unique and feel very uncomfortable claiming specialist status.

If you don't recognise the value you offer your clients, how can you expect prospects to understand the benefits and outcomes they'll receive should they decide to invest in your services?

Remember, while there may always be additional information to learn, what's important is your knowledge, strengths, reputation and the ability to support your clients in overcoming their obstacles and achieving solid results which is the value you offer. Be proud of that and continue to promote your skills and expertise to your ideal prospects in all of your marketing and communications.

3. A strong brand is clear on its target market

For service-based businesses who cannot define their ideal clients' issues and problems while also demonstrating how they can support these clients in overcoming these issues often communicate inconsistent, mixed messages. And, a confused prospect, who doesn't understand what you do or more importantly, how you can support them, will say 'no'.

When a business owner doesn't generate the response they had hoped for they continue to increase their marketing efforts, however as they continue to send out a mixed message, they continue to confuse prospects.

It's an unpleasant vicious circle that can lead to frustration and marketing burnout. As Personal Branding Evangelist – William Arruda aptly states:

"Personal branding is not about being all things to all people or trying to please all of the people all of time; it's about taking a stand and being comfortable knowing that some will not agree with your point of view. Of course, this does not mean being



contrary for the sake of it, either. You must be clear about what you believe and willing to express those beliefs."

- Are you trying to be all things to all people?
- Do you feel like you're on the verge of marketing burnout because despite all the marketing you've been doing, you're just not generating the results you were hoping for?

You may just be sending out mixed and confused messages.

4. A strong brand maintains a consistent on-brand message

It can take a significant amount of time, energy and commitment to build a strong brand, however your brand and reputation can be tarnished by an inappropriate post, picture or conversation you have with members of your community.

Ensure you have key brand management and communication strategies to support you in maintaining a consistent on-brand message.

Be mindful of what you post, your interactions with your community, the pictures you share, the groups you join and the people you associate with. All of these things can negate all of the hard work you've been doing if the message you send out is offbrand.

6. A strong brand continues to build solid relationships with its community

Is building and maintaining solid relationships with your community important to you? It should be. Are you interacting and sharing valuable information with your community?

- Are you responding promptly to your community's comments and questions?
- Do you thank them for sharing your messages with their extended community?

These are all activities you should be doing every day.

Remember, your brand is your reputation; ensure you maintain it – your business's survival depends on it!

Let's have a look defining your lucrative niche.



To ensure we're on the same page when it comes to the meaning of a Niche – I love the description that a niche:

Denoting or relating to products, services, or interests that appeal to a small, specialized section of the population.

One of my colleagues, International Best Selling Author, Speaker and Influencer - Adam Houlahan, speaks about the benefit of a Micro Niche, which I totally agree with.

A micro miche is segmentation of your niche. You are narrowing that WHO or WHAT down even further.

Why is that important? Because similarly with your brand message, the same is when you are creating content to a specific market. If you try to speak to everyone in the market place you end up speaking to no-one.

There are so many benefits of a having a clearly defined niche and micro niche:

- You can enhance your relationships with prospective customers, because you are speaking specifically to what they are struggling with. So they'll notice you.
- You will reduce your competition, because you'll be seen as that influential voice in that specific niche;
- You will increase your visibility, which may sound odd. How can you increase your visibility if you are targeting a narrow section of the market? That's because you can use hashtags and other tactics to speak powerfully and with confidence to that ideal customer who is struggling with that challenge that you are specifically and uniquely qualified to help them overcome.
- And then as you continue to build that reputation as that authority, that Industry Thought Leader people will start to recommend you, and tell other people who have a need for your expertise to people they know, which is of course, word of mouth.

Those are just some of the benefits you'll achieve when you have a clearly defined niche.

You can have a horizontal niche OR a vertical market.

- Niching in a vertical market is focused more on WHO.
- Niching more horizontally is focusing on WHAT.

Let's look at a Horizantal Niche. You go deep into a specific area

Life Coach | Insomnia | Insomnia for middle aged women



Personal Trainer | PT for women | PT for women who have just had a baby

Vertical niche: you go deep in your offerings to a specific market – WHO.

For instance you may be a digital agency that focuses specifically for the financial industry.

Or a software company who is an expert in providing software solutions to the fitness industry.

Or an accounting firm that that offers products and services specifically for the building and construction industry.

You've got to make a decision on how you're going to niche.

I have to admit this is something I struggled with for years, because as a creative if I was doing the one thing over and over, I would have gotten bored. Which is why when I used to work in the career industry, the services I offered were three distinct offerings, which included:

- Resume development so their application would stand out
- Career Coaching to help people find a job they loved;
- Interview Coaching so they could negotiate a salary that paid them what they were worth.

I could very easily just focused on one of those areas, however I wouldn't have been happy.

So I created a tag line: Get noticed, hired and paid what you're worth, which allowed me to focus on specific markets like graduates, senior executives, or women returning to the work place, with various services, but all with the goal and outcome of helping them get noticed, hired and paid what they were worth.

It took focused, committed action to get there. Consistent content. Consistant brand positioning and messaging.



It didn't and it doesn't happen overnight. However I had ALL of these five key foundations in place, which I spoke about earlier, which are:

- 1. A Signature Brand
- 2. Your Lucrative Niche, which we have spoken about in this episode.
- 3. Your Signature System
- 4. Your Signature Programs
- 5. Your Digital Assets, which we will speak about in episode 3 of this series.

Similarly when I started working with business owners – I just didn't focus on one area:

- Signature Brand
- Money Mindset
- Building online Reputations
- Getting over the fear of public speaking and putting together their own Signature Talk

My tag line: Get Noticed, get BOOKED, get paid what you're worth.

And, now when it comes to my work with podcasting I use all of my knowledge and experience over the last two decades to help clients go from Invisible to Influential (and profitable) with a podcast.

I make sure I create a strong, compelling outcome focused tag line and ensure my content and messaging is focused on that area, and have been able to position myself as a pioneer and Industry Thought Leader in the area of podcasting.

In closing, I want to share a conversation I often have with people, which I know will help you as you continue to think about where you want to become known as that Industry Thought Leader.

It relates to a question, I'm often asked, which is:

"How did you become known as 'The Podcasting Queen?"

That's a great question.

I certainly didn't intend to if I look back over ten years ago.



I was a Brand Strategist and helping business owners create their own Signature Brands, and I was leveraging podcasts as a way to get my message out there.

I was focused in the information I was sharing. I was consistent in the message I was sharing. And, I loved being able to interview other people who also contributed their expertise to the conversation and insights I was sharing.

And, people started to notice. So much so that they began to refer to me as The Podcasting Queen. Something I didn't embrace till years later, because (a) I felt a little uncomfortable with the title and (b) I was focusing on helping my clients on developing reputable, distinctive Signature Brands, effective marketing and solid business foundations so they could get noticed, hired and paid what they were worth.

So, when someone congratulated me on how I had branded myself 'The Podcasting Queen.'

"While I'd like to take the credit - I can't," I explained. "In fact, it was only after years of guests and colleagues referring to me as the queen of podcasting AND I realised that my experience and everything I had learned with regards to leveraging a podcast to help me build my brand and reputation, and where the market was shifting and people were finally recognising the power of podcasting and being able to build their reach, visibility and Brands - that I finally decided to 'get over myself' and embrace the title, as for years, I felt uncomfortable when people would refer to me this way."

When I shared this with her, she asked whether I had any tips on how to get people to call you the 'queen' of anything.

It was an interesting question: How do you become recognised in a specific area (i.e. that influential voice) so that your community begins to refer to you this way and recognises you as an Industry Thought Leader? Perhaps even before you do so yourself?

When I looked back over my career, I had been doing numerous podcast interviews and connecting with guests from all over the world for years. Interviewing others was something I loved to do, so it was something I did, week after week, year after year. In fact, had you told me over a decade ago that podcasting would become my full-time business, I wouldn't have believed you.

So, based on my own experience my response to her was:

"Love what you do and get good at it - REALLY good at it. And, if it aligns with your



strengths - it'll show, often to others first."

My friend, that's my advice to you too as you seek to build your reputation as an Industry Thought Leader. Get totally clear on what you love to do and ensure it aligns with your innate strengths. Then get good at it. REALLY good at it, by doing it day in and day out. Then capture that message and passion in your podcast so you can take your message to the world and impact others through the ongoing value you provide. People will notice. And, soon they'll be referring to you as that go-to person. An Industry Thought Leader.

I can't wait to share more in episode two. 5 Common barriers that'll keep you stuck from becoming known as an Authority in your field.

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